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# YOU SELL WITH YOUR VOICE

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## PREFACE

In the field of salesmanship, one element of great practical importance to success has apparently been overlooked—the salesman's voice. The voice is one of the salesman's indispensable tools. Customers are sold as much through their ears as through their eyes. Yet so far as the authors know there has been no book on the voice factor in salesmanship.

The authors make no claim to any new discoveries, nor do they expect this little book to remake or reshape any large portions of this world of salesmanship, but they feel there is much to be said for turning the spotlight at this time upon the voice in its relation to the salesman. As a nation we are surely growing more voice conscious. We are moving toward better speech. The popularity of the radio and talking pictures, the widespread use of the telephone, are making us acutely aware of the importance of a good voice. A bad voice in the movies or on the radio has no chance today. And a progressive, efficient salesman meeting the general public as he does every day cannot avoid making some impression on the discriminating ears of his customers. To keep in step with the best methods of modern salesmanship, he cannot ignore the place of the voice in selling.

Nature gives some of us better voices than others, but no one has a perfect voice. The problem is not one of remaking the voice nature has given you. The question is not so much what kind of a voice you have, but how you

use it and what are its possibilities in terms of selling power. Our aim is to develop its hidden virtues so you may register the highest level of effective oral expression in sales work. Every voice has its faults and virtues. It is possible, and most profitable for salesmen, to build up the good voice qualities and suppress the bad ones. The accomplishments in voice improvement are often amazing. At a little cost and trouble this improvement will make you a more successful salesman.

E. C. B.  
M. M.

July, 1939.

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YOU SELL  
WITH YOUR VOICE



## CHAPTER 1

### YOUR VOICE AND THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Tom Sawyer was a salesman; he sold his playmates the right to whitewash the back fence. Patrick Henry was a salesman; he sold the colonists the courage to fight for liberty. Christopher Columbus was a salesman; he sold Queen Isabella of Spain a long-shot ticket on a short-cut route to India. Socrates was a salesman; he sold a way of life and a new set of human values. Henry Ford was a salesman; he sold the American people the horseless carriage. We find the story of civilization packed full of stories of salesmen; people selling goods, services, patriotism, human rights—whatever had value. Indeed, every human being must be a salesman. And whether you are selling ships, cabbages, or sealing wax, you have one thing in common with all other salesmen—you all depend upon one instrument for your work: the human voice.

The voice is the one tool essential to every salesman. You who have made selling your profession, you who make your bread and butter by selling, you more than anyone else will find your voice the open-sesame to success. The voice is as important to the sales game as the baseball is to a ball game. You cannot sell without the voice any more than you can play baseball without a ball. Yet how many salesmen realize this fact?

Here is a fact for Ripley's "Believe-It-Or-Not." Hardly one salesman in a hundred will give more than casual atten-

tion to his voice. Yet ninety-nine out of one hundred will spend endless time on dress, cleanliness, and personal appearance. Take a look at the typical American salesman. Here he is, John Jones. He is in direct contact with the American people every day. He speaks thirty thousand words between sunrise and sunset, a thousand for every one he writes. His voice is his fortune. Give him a head cold or paralyze his vocal cords for a month and he can't make a nickel. John Jones studied reading and writing from eight to sixteen years but he never spent five minutes on his voice. Yet here he is, a salesman, utterly dependent on that same voice. He knows a great deal about human nature. He knows that he must keep up his personal appearance; he presses his trousers daily, yet lets his voice bag at the knees. He gargles with antiseptic twice a day, brushes his teeth morning and evening, yet he has vocal halitosis. He just spent \$15.00 for an electric razor with which he shaves carefully every morning, yet he lets his voice grow a long beard of indistinctness that loses sales for him every day. This is the "Believe-It-Or-Not" picture of John Jones, the American salesman. There are millions of John Joneses. They are utterly dependent upon their voices for a living and yet the voice is the last thing they worry about.

A good selling voice is more than a mere instrument of expression; it is more than a device for recording and communicating facts and ideas. The voice is part of *you*; in a way, it is your real self. Because the voice is so intimate and personal, it lies at the heart of all salesmanship.

Selling may be an impersonal thing in the accounts and records. You can get it on a printed page in black and red.

There are figures for manufacturing costs, for labor costs, for rent, advertising, taxes, and so on. These figures representing costs in the selling process are as cold as a banker's glance treated that way. But, to the salesman and to the customer, selling is something human and real, something intimate, something full of the humorous and likable and pleasant quirks that the human equation puts into every situation.

That is why most selling is done *in person*—which means, *through the voice*. That is why a sales manager will spend \$50.00 on long distance calls to close a deal, rather than spend \$5.00 on telegrams. He knows that the personal element can be effectively injected by telephone. That is why, in some cases, he will hop into a plane and fly across the country just to have a business conference. He wants to use that most effective of sales tools: the salesman's personality as projected through his voice.

There is something persuasive and impressive in direct personal contact. Just by being there, chatting with your client or customer, you automatically gain something which can be lost only if you deliberately antagonize him. Often the insurance salesman does the groundwork for selling his biggest policies on the golf course. Nine holes or eighteen holes, a shower, a little comfortable relaxation at the club house . . . this is a favorable build-up for a friendly business talk. Why? Personal contact—worked chiefly through the voice. When the old-time traveling salesman walked into Perkins' Cross-roads Store, did he yank out his order book and growl, "Anything today?" He did not. He played up the personal contact by telling some of the latest stories from the city, and after Cy Perkins had

laughed his specs down onto the end of his nose, then did the salesman get down to brass tacks.

The human touch does the trick!

And the human touch—if we may scramble a metaphor—is principally vocal.

The human being is a sociable animal. Put him in contact with another human being, and nine times out of ten the two will get to chatting and telling stories until in half an hour they are slapping each other on the back. Most of our hatreds are effective only at long range. During the World War, the arm-chair patriots on this side of the Atlantic were bitter in their denunciations of everything German. At the same time, American army officers were forced to issue definite orders that American soldiers were not to fraternize with their enemy. Imagine it! Month after month, Germans and Americans were forced under orders to spend their days and nights trying to murder each other; but the moment they got a halfway excuse for stopping, the moment they got a chance *to talk to* each other, they began to trade cigarettes and canned willie and chocolate bars and souvenirs.

By nature, we like company. Given half a chance, we like to visit and be sociable. We naturally like to be part of a little friendly circle. It is more human to start up a friendship than to start a fight. We are suspicious only when we have a hunch that someone is out to do us harm, for it is more natural to like people than to hate them. Will Rogers once said that he never met a person whom he did not like. It is only the abnormal person, the perennial "Scrooge," or the psychopathic who suspects or dislikes everyone on general principles.

Just to meet and talk with the other fellow gives you an advantage. To be in the mere presence of your customer tips the scale in your favor. But remember that long before you ever come to the point of selling your product your voice has already been at work making or breaking a sale for you. When you meet your customer and shake hands with him and say, "Hello, how are you?" do not think for a moment that you have done all of your handshaking with your hand. Most of your handshaking is done with your voice, and it is the vocal handshake that really makes the impression. And if you can say, "How are you?" as if you meant it, your customer will get a good impression of you. But if you say, "How are you?" in a cold-hearted tone with an edge of a snarl, you are simply shouldering your customer out of the way and you are off to a bad start.

There are all sorts of minute impressions of you which your customer gets without realizing it. Your looks, your facial expression, the color of your hair, the twinkle in your eye, the way you dress, your height, your size, your weight: all these things contribute to that man's opinion of you. In his mind he may say, "I kinda like him," or he may say the opposite, "I don't like that fellow." But he may not be able to say exactly why. He cannot pick out and analyze in detail why he has these impressions of you. But they all add up to the same answer—his feeling about you. And of all these many impressions of you which the customer receives, he is most of all influenced by that one factor: your voice.

More than we realize, the world of salesmanship revolves around the axis of the human voice. In fact, our whole civilization rests upon speech and the spoken word.

Suppose you, as an individual, should lose your voice, go dumb like a run-down phonograph. The loss of your voice would not cause a ripple upon civilization. But suppose a million, ten million, a hundred million men should be struck silent over night. That would indeed be a serious blow to the life of your community, the world of commerce, and the nation. And if you stopped all speech, stopped it quite suddenly without tapering off, our cities would be empty in a few weeks and our civilization smashed in less than a year. In a few months the law of the jungle would rule over the world and man would be just another roving animal pitting his weapons against a menacing and destructive universe. What has this to do with salesmanship, you say? The answer is simple. Whatever has to do with human life and human welfare also has to do with salesmanship. Not a child is born on this earth who is not destined to be some sort of a salesman. Every hour of every day, in speech, in action, in writing, we are selling something—ourselves, our ideas, our wants, our wares—to someone. You are a salesman twice over, for you have made a profession of selling. It is your business. It is your means of livelihood. But, specialist in selling or not, your work must be done by one common medium: speech. Look to your speech, Mr. Salesman, for it makes the world in which you live. Look to your voice, Mr. Salesman, lest it mar your fortune.

## CHAPTER 2

### THERE'S MAGIC IN YOUR VOICE!

**Magic!**

The word has a ring which, time out of mind, has entranced men and women.

The ardent young lover of the Middle Ages hocked his longbow to buy a magic love-philtre which (he was sure) would win the girl next door.

The prince and the merchant alike bought juju charms to eliminate their rivals, either military or commercial.

To win admiration, affection, friendship; to triumph over rivals: that has been the goal of magic.

Yet, during all these long centuries, most people have overlooked the one natural magic, the thing which can bring both affection and success: the voice.

Not everyone has overlooked this vocal magic. All the way through history, you can pick out—here and there—the names of men and women with spell-casting voices.

Socrates, for instance, was such a man. Probably he was the homeliest man in Greek history . . . an ugly man living among a people who prized physical beauty above everything else. A beauty contest booby prize would have been rank flattery to him. Snub nose, chunky shapeless features, a bald head too big for his body . . . that was Socrates. One of his students said he looked like a satyr . . . a cross between a goat and a man. Yet Socrates was one of the most fascinating individuals who ever lived.

Why? His voice. It was said of him that when he spoke, the words seemed divine; but when anyone else spoke the same words, they were flat and dull.

Actually, there are many such personalities in the world, men and women who, because of their rich conversation and beautiful voices, make others forget their physical plainness. You may have met, at some time or other, a very plain looking, plainly dressed, completely colorless individual who fascinated everyone who met him.

Now there is a reason for this magic which the voice has for us. The reason is that we are so constructed as to be very sensitive to sound. The spoken word, music, or just plain noise twists our emotional nature into bow knots. A man's affections may be reached through his alimentary canal—but actually, the shorter road is through the ear.

Dr. John Watson, the eminent psychologist, carried on a series of experiments with a newborn baby. He found that we start out in this world with only two basic fears—the fear of falling, or loss of support, and the fear of loud noises. It is this emotional reaction to sound effects, primitive in our nature, which may be both a blessing and a curse to us as we go on our way through this world. This tendency to be afraid of sound effects is why we jump at firecrackers on the Fourth of July and never completely get over our fear of thunder. By nature we are emotionally stirred up by what we hear. That is why music has long been recognized as the most emotional of all arts.

You have heard the expression, blood-curdling yells. Voice sounds of animals and men have strange emotional power over each other. Animal trainers rely largely upon their vocal effects. Cowboys of the western plains com-

monly used chants and songs to quiet the herds. Large cattle owners often hired and paid their cowboys according to their ability to control cattle stampedes by the power of their voices. Did you ever hear the cry of a mountain lion, the cry of a fox, the scream of a horse when the barn was burning down, or the cry of the lonely loon when its mate was killed? If you have, you will probably remember these cries as long as you live.

There is a story of two old trappers, shut up in a cabin in the north woods. They were chatting together one evening; one was boasting that he had no nerves, that he was never afraid. Suddenly they heard a sound—a shrill, unearthly scream. It was the cry of a fox. For some time neither of them acted consciously. When they recovered themselves, one man found that he had automatically double-barred the cabin door and snatched up his Winchester. Next morning he found something else: there were black-and-blue marks along his arm where his nerveless friend had seized him.

And we are sensitive to the more pleasant sounds, too. We once coached a young man for a national oratorical contest. He was a brilliant speaker, and he had prepared a splendid speech. We were pretty sure that he would walk away with the hundred-dollar prize that was offered. We were even more sure when we heard him deliver his oration. He was seventh among eight speakers, and he had clearly outclassed the rest. But when he finished, a girl got up to speak—the only girl in the contest. She was from Alabama, and when she stood up and began in that liquid Southern drawl, “Wheah youah heart is, theah is youah home,” my contestant grinned and shook his head. He had

lost and he knew it. You simply cannot beat a voice like that.

History books and old plays time and again put before us the scene where some disturbed ruler, some moody king, calls in the court musician or the court fool to sing or read poetry to soothe his nerves. Remember that strange and impressive passage in the Bible which tells how the devil-ridden Saul called in the young David to sing to him.

See how the spell cast by sound effects helps to key up our athletic sports. Imagine a football game without a band, at which the spectators sat quietly, without cheering! If Congress were to pass a law tomorrow which would ban all sound effects—music and cheering—at football games, either football or Congress would be overthrown within a year. What would a baseball game be without the cheering crowds?

Military leaders of all races and times have recognized the power of sound on human beings. As long as there have been armies, there have been regimental bands to keep up morale. In older times, generals always addressed their troops before a battle; the very sound of the voice heartened them and stirred them. Since the days of the Cro-Magnon men, there have been war cries which served the same purpose: the Cherokee's gobble, the Comanche's yell, the Moslem's cry of "Allah!", the Greek trumpet blast—the paeon, the Roman's "Alala." Old soldiers usually learn the trick of talking endlessly, telling tall yarns, singing . . . just to keep the raw recruits from giving way to their nerves. And then we have those modern battle cries, the college football yells that pull old grads back to the campuses year after year.

But let's get down to salesmanship. For right here is the vocal magic that pays.

We used to hear a great deal about public speakers being spellbinders, and that was no myth. The voice has always cast its spell in one way or another, hypnotizing millions upon millions of people into buying everything from soap to religion. Vocal magic—casting a spell with the voice—is just another way of saying supersalesmanship.

Look at the record . . . of the world's religions, for example. Here in our own twentieth century, such people as Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson have sold according to their popularized methods a sort of religion to millions. And their religious ideas did not sell themselves. With all due respect to these hell-fire evangelists, it was their technique that did the trick . . . that rousing, rip-roaring, exciting voice of Billy Sunday, the hypnotic, mellow cadence of Aimee Semple McPherson.

Look at the record again . . . the politicians this time, selling themselves and their ideas to millions. When Patrick Henry cried, "Give me liberty or give me death!" there was in his voice a sound of trumpets that called a nation to arms. When William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued orator of the Platte, got up before the Democratic convention in Chicago, he sold those hard-headed politicians a million dollars' worth of free silver and the rights of labor. After the sale was made, the customers read the sales speech and couldn't find much in it. And you have heard a lot about the magic power of Franklin D. Roosevelt's voice. From a standpoint of pure spell-casting, Roosevelt had his competitors, Hoover and Landon,

backed off the map. They didn't have or didn't use a voice that sells. Roosevelt sold hope and confidence through his voice. And finally, there are the great dictators of Europe, Mussolini and Hitler, who have sold whole nations a united front against the world under the fascist banners—their medium the human voice.

Look at the record again . . . this time the business world and in particular the retail sales clerks of department stores. Some years ago one of the largest and most famous department stores in America, Marshall Field & Co. of Chicago, made an extensive survey among its better customers to find out what clerks they liked best and why. It was noticed that many of the better-class buyers would come in the store and wait around for Miss So-and-So. The management began to ask these customers why they wanted Miss So-and-So to wait on them and the usual answer was, "Oh, I don't know; I just like her voice, it is so restful and pleasing. I just can't stand the voices of some of your other clerks." Further investigation of the case histories of the more popular clerks of the store showed that nine out of ten had experience in singing in some choir or taking part in dramatic productions.

The management recognized the dollars-and-cents value of good voices among the sales force. So important was the voice to the sales clerk behind the counter of Marshall Field & Co. that for many years this firm has had a store choir in charge of an expert director—all for one purpose, improving the voices of the sales clerks. People buy with their ears as well as their eyes, and where goods of an intimate and personal nature are concerned, the ears do more buying than the eyes.

Today, music in industry is getting to be a common practice and probably more than a hundred stores have inaugurated their own choirs for the purpose of cultivating good voices among their sales people.

Yes, there's magic in the voice! Selling magic. The voice is that prism through which the color of the personality shines. And personalities move the world.

Selling is determined primarily by emotion, not by reason. That much has been established in scientific laboratories, by experiment. Human beings do what they want to do—not what they think is best.

Salesmanship has a pinch of logic for every tablespoonful of human wants and desires. It has a teaspoonful of reason for every cupful of emotion. That is not surprising, because the language of the heart is always stronger than the language of the head. And the heart responds to what it hears.

Remember the old silent movies? They wouldn't have sold a dime's worth of film drama if it had not been for that orchestra in the pit, or for the dexterous pianist doing "Hearts and Flowers" for the sad scenes. We were in Chicago once, fifteen years ago, when every movie theatre in the city was shut down. That didn't happen because there were no films to show. It happened because the orchestra unions throughout the city were on strike. No music, no show.

When the talkies came in, a friend of mine laughed. "They're tin-pot gadgets," he said, "they're knick-knacks. They won't last six months." I told him that in six months they would reach far beyond Broadway in New York and the Loop in Chicago, and in six years they would be com-

mon in the crossroad villages and hamlets of the nation. I knew I was right because the talking pictures were striking directly at the human heart. With the magic of music and voice added to drama, nothing could stop the success of the talking pictures.

Radio in ten years or so has grown out of the amazing gadget stage to a place where it is one of the nation's great industries and an integral part of our everyday lives. Why? The reason for its phenomenal growth and development is the same as that of the talkies. It, too, reaches into our lives through our ears—feeding our emotional hungers and gratifying our emotional tastes. Our commercial advertisers pay millions of dollars every year to advertise and sell goods and services by voice and music.

The ear is every man's weak point . . . his Achilles' heel, if we may distort a little physiology. We are all subject to this strange magic which lies in the human voice.

Now let us tie this up even more directly to your own business of selling. Billions of dollars of turnover in commercial products takes place every year in this country because of vocal magic. Vocal magic on the air, over telephone wires, and the vocal magic which weaves its spell in direct, personalized selling. The voice that casts the spell is, we believe, a big secret in good salesmanship. Whether you're selling washing machines to Mrs. Brown or whether you're selling yourself as governor of the state of Texas to the whangdang of hill-billy music and the tune of "Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy," vocal magic is the thing that does the job for you.

Twenty-five billion times a year in this country, someone picks up a telephone receiver and asks for a number.

That is what the American Telephone and Telegraph Company says. One billion times a year, someone asks for "long distance, please." Some of those calls represent charges of over a hundred dollars each. What is the answer? Salesmanship! Calling up customers to sell shoes, ships, sealing wax, yourself . . . selling everything imaginable. From young Joe Jones selling Mary Smith the idea of a date on Saturday night to Henry Ford closing a million dollar deal over the wires . . . it's all the same. Salesmanship. It's simply more satisfactory to talk to the other fellow, even if you can't see him. The songwriter had it about right when he called his ditty, "Can't We Talk It Over?"

In direct selling, the average salesman in a day's work will speak from thirty to forty thousand words. In two days, his words would make up a volume as large as the average-sized novel. In less than two weeks, a stenographic report of his words would form a manuscript larger, heaven forbid! than "Anthony Adverse" or "Gone With the Wind."

The average salesman spends a good deal of money on his personal appearance. He has his clothes pressed, he wears a clean shirt. He gargles with Listerine and bathes with Lifebuoy. He shaves with extra-keen razor blades and anoints his smooth face with the most healing lotions. All this for personal appearance.

Yes, you try to work magic on the customer, to cast a spell. But do you spend as much as two minutes a day to improve your voice? If you don't, you are passing up one of your greatest opportunities. You are throwing away the key to more successful selling.

### CHAPTER 3

## YOUR VOICE AND YOU

"Sure I buy from him. If you know him, you know he's honest. And anyway, he's a fine fellow. I like to buy from him."

Have you ever heard that said about a salesman? Of course you have. In this country it has been estimated that there is a thirty-billion-dollar "margin of indifference" in the total amount of business turnover. That is, thirty billion dollars' worth of goods and services are sold through the efforts of advertising and selling. This is indeed a big price for human inertia. Let this human inertia take its toll upon our economic system and we would have a business slump that would make most economic depressions look like a wave of prosperity. It is this thirty billion dollars' worth of business created by the art of advertising and selling which helps to hold up the present business structure. American industry is a going concern because of the vast army of salesmen who are "fine fellows."

If you consider it in this light, your customer's opinion of you takes on a new importance. Are you one of these fine fellows? And if by chance you could be a finer fellow how would you go about it?

How does a customer get his opinions or feelings about you? From clothes? They help, of course, but anyone can buy good clothes and take care of them. From your physical make-up? Possible, of course, but not likely. Too

many handsome gentlemen are considered rather subhuman by their associates. The late Will Rogers, one of the best-liked men in our times, was scarcely a handsome man or an impressive physical specimen. From your wealth or economic prestige? Again, possible—but not essential. A man of wealth might have a reputation to go with it, which would help his selling if he were a salesman. But on the other hand, the customer might just as readily take the word of some poor but likable individual about the same product. After all, if wealth were a prerequisite to selling, you and I and most of our salesmen friends would be on government relief.

How does the customer get his ideas about you, then? Obviously, if he says you're a "fine fellow," he is talking about your personality. And the principal thing from which a man can make an estimate of your personality is your speech and your voice.

Your voice is you. In a most peculiar and distinctive way, your voice is a kind of symbol of your personality. It is your one feature which expresses the real person that is yourself. With incredible accuracy it reflects what you are and how you feel. We cannot, for example, detach the unreformed Scrooge from his snarl, or John Falstaff from his booming tones. No more can we detach your own particular quality of voice from you, or even from your momentary physical condition. If you are tired, your voice is flat and dull. If you are exhilarated, your voice lifts and fairly sparkles with life. If you are ill, your voice reflects your state of health.

This voice of yours is the most distinctive thing about you: it is a kind of trademark of your personality. With

one or two exceptions, it is the most difficult thing about you to change. You can have your hair hacked to a Prussian bristle or let it grow into a mane. You can grow a beard and then shave it off. You can turn from conservative blue serge to tweeds with checks the size of playing cards. You can develop a peculiar walk. You can have a plastic surgeon remodel your face to look like Robert Taylor or Boris Karloff or Old Man Mose. You can starve yourself into the shape of a broom handle or eat until you look like the Graf Zeppelin. Having done these things, you can walk into a circle of intimate friends unrecognized—until you open your mouth. But the moment you speak, it will be, "Why, Joe! What in the name of thus-and-so have you been doing to yourself?" That distinctive voice quality of yours will betray you.

Yes, you can change your speech! You can train yourself, for instance, to speak clearly or indistinctly. You can make your speech clipped and brisk after the English fashion, or you can drag it out Southern style until it flows like luke-warm molasses. You can make your speech round and full and beautiful to the ear, or you can let it slide into unpleasantness and slovenliness. But beneath it all will remain that basic speech pattern which is yours because it expresses your personality. You can't change that.

You have had that voice, potentially at least, since you were born. You had all the physical mechanisms to produce it at birth, and gradually through a process of howling your head off at three o'clock in the morning, of arguing vociferously with your six-year-old contemporaries over a game of cops-and-robbers, of yelling your way through endless baseball games, you developed it almost to what it

is today. Basically your voice hasn't changed much since you were sixteen years old.

Now on this basic vocal pattern of yours, *you can build!* You can, with remarkably little effort, train and develop this potentially valuable voice of yours into something which will pay you generous dividends, because your voice is your personality, and your personality makes sales!

Naturally, you don't want to change your voice. No one should ever attempt that. But nearly everyone's voice is undeveloped. Your voice is probably not the instrument it should be, to express your personality in the sales situation.

Take for example the vocal attribute of pitch . . . that is, how high or how low your voice can go. You have a natural pitch, a normal key in which you usually speak. This natural pitch is determined by your physical vocal equipment: the length and thickness of your vocal bands, the size and shape of your larynx. Exercises for your voice should never attempt to change that pitch, but they should develop and increase your range . . . the number of notes you can reach above and below the normal pitch. They should, furthermore, develop the quality of your voice within that range.

The question which you must answer for yourself is this. Will you use a little care and common sense to make this voice of yours enhance your personality, display it to your public as something engaging and colorful? Or will you, through carelessness and indifference, let your voice cloud and distort your personality?

To illustrate the point let us look at two department-store owners. Both of them are selling the same kind of

merchandise. Both of them have arranged exactly the same window display. But Jones' window-glass hasn't been washed in months; it is stained and clouded with dirt. It was badly made glass in the first place; there are flaws in it, and a great crack runs across one corner. A passer-by has to strain his eyes to see clearly what Jones is offering. It's quite different with Competitor Brown. Brown has clean, sparkling glass in his window, well-washed, flawless, crackless, and slightly concave so that the reflections won't blind passers-by. Who gets the business? Brown, of course.

In the same way, here are two salesmen, Jones and Brown. Physically and mentally they are alike. They wear about the same type of clothes, look alike, and sell exactly the same kind of goods. But Jones has a high, whiny, tin-pan voice, or he has a hard, flat, raspy voice. When he speaks, his diction is so foggy you can hardly understand him, and if you do manage to catch what he says, you are still irritated by the unpleasant tones. If you were a customer what would you do? Naturally, you would shy away from him. You would cut the business conversation as short as possible. Brown, on the other hand, has a rich, pleasant, full-toned voice. You can understand him with ease and you find yourself fascinated by his clear, beautiful expression. In fact, you enjoy listening to him. And if you know him to be honest you find yourself warming up to him. So if there is any business, who will get it? Again, Mr. Brown.

Yet this voice, which can be so valuable to you, is pretty largely nature's gift. You can't throw it away or trade it in on a new voice. For better or for worse, it's yours and it is up to you to use it well. Develop it, find out its good

points and its weaknesses, its limitations and merits. Try to see how it affects other people; and gradually, over a period of time, make a real effort to project your personality through your voice.

Your first job—get a line on your voice. And that's not so easy. You can stand before a mirror and see whether you are tall or short, fat or skinny, dirty or clean. It's not hard to tell whether your skin is rough or smooth, whether your hair is combed, and so forth. But when it comes to getting a line on your voice—that's another story.

You don't really know how your voice sounds, because the voice box and the organs of tone production are tied up with the organs of hearing. You can't hear yourself as you really are.

What to do about it? In other chapters we will discuss more fully certain technical aspects of improving your voice, but here we wish to offer a few common-sense suggestions which will help you to use your voice to express your own self, your own personality.

First, criticize yourself. Constantly check up on your own speech and your own voice. Ask yourself, "Do I have enough voice? Do I always talk loudly enough? Am I easily heard and understood?" If your customer frequently asks you to repeat what you said, you can be sure that you are either indistinct or are not speaking loudly enough. How about your pitch? Is it too high? Most people's voices are too high in pitch. Are you slovenly and fuzzy in the pronunciation of your words? Are you placing your tones so your voice has a clear ringing sound? Are you generally careless about your speech or do you have as much pride about your voice and diction as you have about your

personal appearance? Turn the spotlight of criticism upon yourself. An honest job of self-appraisal of your own voice and speech is a most important step in developing a better voice.

Sometimes it is very difficult to criticize yourself. If you feel that your voice is deficient, have a record made of it. Recording devices may be found in some music stores, at radio stations, and in speech departments in the larger universities. Many business firms with large sales forces maintain recording machines for the purpose of improving the voices of their salesmen. A record of your voice will help you to see your own faults. Check up on your quality, on your speaking pace, your pitch, your inflection, your method of emphasis, and so forth. Talk over your voice problems with some competent, sympathetic critic.

Second, have others criticize you. Let your wife or some friend comment upon your speech habits and your mannerisms. Always be willing to listen to what others have to say about your own voice, for it is the impression that you make upon others which is important, not the impression that you make upon yourself.

A good way to get an estimate of your voice as based upon the opinions of others is to use some system of rating your faults and virtues such as is provided for in the score cards found at the end of Chapter 7. Have sufficient copies made of these cards. Then pass them around to others who are in a position to give some critical judgment of your voice. If possible, have some person act as a "go-between" for you so that you may obtain an impersonal, impartial and frank expression from others about your voice. After

you have had fifteen or twenty people fill out these cards, you may tabulate the results under each of the twenty items, and thus get some idea of your main virtues and defects.

Third, listen with a critical ear and eye to the speech of others. See what hints and suggestions you can get from them. Be careful not to imitate another person. Possibly by some horrible example in another, you may be able to see your own faults. Listen critically to voices over the radio, at the movies and in your place of business. Observe tone, quality, the fluency of speech. Observe pitch, methods of coloring the thought and emotion. Note how some people hold your interest with a quiet, soft, but animated voice. Develop your critical faculties to a point where you become sensitive to good voices. As you learn to appreciate the finer qualities in voices of others, you will naturally become more critical of your own voice.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE SURE-FOOTED VOICE

Take a lesson from Sal. She was a mountain burro—a sleepy, dreamy-eyed, forlorn-looking little beast. Sal's mission in life was to lug Eastern tourists up the side of a very steep mountain in the Colorado Rockies. She was good at it, too. One morning standing with a friend, a sensitive sort of chap who was fond of animals, we were watching Sal start the long climb up a cliff, carrying two hundred pounds of female tourist.

"Poor little devil," our friend said.

We took it for granted he meant Sal and snorted. Just then, about three hundred feet up the cliff, Sal ducked her head to yank a bit of grass from the outer edge of the narrow trail. The Amazon astride her let out an agonized yelp and grabbed Sal's neck. From up ahead came the drawling voice of the "guide": "Jest let her alone, lady. You'll be all right."

We made quite a speech to our friend after that. Sal, we told him, was a competent, intelligent beast, fully capable of doing her job well. She never made a mistake, and had more common sense than many of the people who rode her.

The moral to the story is—be like Sal, the burro. Know what you're doing. Be sure of yourself. Learn your business so well that you never slip, slide, stumble, or seem to be in danger of falling. Be sure-footed.

How important it is to be sure-footed in the selling game! The first evidence of sure-footedness is confidence. Every salesman knows that. And the great manufacturing concerns believe it—enough to spend millions every year in training their salesmen. That training represents a real start toward sure-footedness in selling, because it gives the salesman an intimate knowledge of his product. He always has on the tip of his tongue the right thing at the right time. He knows the complete story of his product from factory to consumer, he knows the raw materials, he knows all the latest changes in the manufacturing process and why they have been made. After such a training course, the salesman knows his product inside and out, in much the same way that he knows his ABC's. That knowledge is valuable enough for larger companies to spend millions of dollars training their sales force. Why? It gives sure-footedness in meeting all the sudden objections, criticisms, questions, and unexpected problems in any sales talk.

"Know your product" is often called the first rule. But it is not enough to know your stuff. You must match your "knowing" with mastery in displaying your wares. How is this done? By talk. And that means language and voice. Now for the moment we will assume that you have a good command of language, that the most expressive words and phrases are second nature to you. But how sure-footed is your voice? Does it slip and slide and stumble through the sales situation? Or does it pick its way confidently, making the most of every little ledge and crevice to further the sale? Remember that you can open your customer's door by the way you use your voice. Or, on the other hand, you can slam that door in your own face.

We have been talking in parables to dramatize and clarify this idea of a "sure-footed" sales voice. Now let's get down to cases. Here is a thumbnail sketch of a sales voice with triple A rating:

Number one, an adequate voice.

Number two, a distinct voice.

Number three, a friendly voice.

Number four, an interesting voice.

Number five, a voice with magnetic fluency.

Number six, a voice registering your personality.

1. **Do you have enough voice?**—You needn't bellow until you strain your throat, but you should have enough voice that your customer can hear you in an easy, comfortable manner. That means you should have a strong, full voice . . . not necessarily a loud one. It means that your voice should sound natural and easy, never strained or forced.

Perhaps you can get the idea better if we look at the other side. Did you ever lose your voice? Maybe you had a cold, maybe you yelled too much at a boxing match. But next morning you got up and found to your dismay that the best vocal effort you could produce was a kind of cross between a squeak and a whisper. Every time you'd try to say something, your friends would immediately respond with, "What did you say? I couldn't hear you." Probably it was worse if you talked over the telephone, because you couldn't make signs over the telephone. All in all, it was pretty bad. To try to sell that day was about as futile as a swing band without a drum.

Yet there are men and women who are confirmed whisperers and squeakers. Their voices remind one of a resined

string going through a tin can. Their problem is to get more depth and fullness in their tones.

Two little girls . . . sisters—Patsie and Posie, ages eight and ten—take piano lessons. When Patsie plays, she plays on top of the keys. She skims lightly over the ivories, getting only surface tones . . . thin, weedy sounds with little life or body. But when Posie plays, she seems to reach deep into the keyboard, drawing out a round, rich, full tone. Her tones have depth. They don't sound shallow or empty. Speaking and playing the piano are much alike in this sense. Work for the rich, full deep tones in your voice.

Try to talk as if you were dipping down deep into the chest for your tones. Talk from the waist up. If you can practice this, it will help you to produce fuller tones. Of course, you don't "dig down" as the bass does for that last low note in "Asleep in the Deep." Your best tones come from a combination of resonance from both head and chest.

You can help out this "digging down" process with several simple exercises. In the morning, while you're smearing lather on your face—not while you're scraping it off!—try reciting this rhyme:

What, ho! What fun!  
I've got you on the run!

And pull those tones up from your toes. Here's another:

I'm a bold, bad man! I'm a desperado!  
I'm from Cripple Creek, Colorado!

When you speak these lines, put some force and snap into them. Don't shout; just speak naturally. (For further study and practice see exercises for a dynamic voice, page 75.)

Another suggestion for cultivating an adequate voice: throw your tones into the mask of your face. The mask of your face provides the main sounding board for your voice. Roughly, the space enclosed by that sounding board is the front of your face represented by the triangular area with the top of each cheekbone and the front teeth as the three points of the triangle.

Be careful you don't throw your tones too high or you will catch too much of the nasal cavity—and produce hard, twangy, nasal tones like that of newsboys, circus barkers, and tough guys. People who have to use their voices very strenuously are inclined to speak nasally, simply because that kind of speaking is easier on the vocal mechanism. If you focus your tones into your nasal cavity, you can learn to shriek like a newsboy for hours without tiring, but you will soon get the habit of producing unpleasant tones.

Use the singer's trick of chanting in a level monotone: "me-me-me-me-me-me." Or you can hum, trying to make the sound as deep and full as you can. Or you can repeat rapidly the word: "money, money, money, money, money." Or chant this slogan in a singsong manner: "Make more money Monday morning." Repeat rapidly such words as one-one-one; mum-mum-mum; sing-sing-sing.

When you talk, try to think your tones through the front of your face. Imagine that you are holding the tones in your mouth, that they are ready to jump out as soon as you open your lips. Remember that it's your job to open your mouth and relax your lips, in order to release the tones freely. (See further exercises for resonance, pages 76-77.)

2. **What are you saying?**—The most carefully prepared sales talk, spoken in the richest voice imaginable, is no good . . . if the customer can't tell what you're saying. You must be distinct! Anyone knows that a sales talk butters no parsnips if the customer can't hear it. Everyone *does* know the rule of distinctness. But it's a rule which remains just a rule for too many salesmen. Too many sales talks, as far as the customer is concerned, go like this: "Howja likta . . . mumble, mumble . . . best in the West . . . mumble, mumble . . . saves time and trouble . . . mumble . . . saves money . . . mumble . . . mumble, mumble . . . sign here."

Most of our troubles in distinct talking may be traced to lazy lips and lazy tongue. Did you ever hold a big bite of ice cream in your mouth for a long time and then try to speak distinctly at a rapid pace? If you haven't, try it some time. You will find it very difficult because your chilled tongue has become numb by the cold. Your tongue is all thumbs and your diction is badly blurred. The tongue, particularly the tip of the tongue, helps to make your enunciation clear, crisp, and clean cut.

Don't be afraid to open your mouth and use plenty of lip action. A good way to test the ability of your lips for distinctness is to talk with your teeth tightly clenched. Three or four minutes of speaking twice a day for a month in this manner will lift the average person's rating in distinctness by a wide margin. Also tongue-twisters will help you if you have trouble in enunciating your words clearly. Try: "Susie sells sea shells by the sea shore." Or that other old favorite: "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers; how many pecks of pickled peppers did Peter Piper

pick?" Take them slowly at first, and try to give every sound and whisper its full value. Improve your distinctness. It is an important step in the making of a sure-footed voice. (For further study and practice see pages 83-86.)

**3. How friendly are you?**—Of course, you can put a smile in your voice! Let some warmth and humanness glow in your tones. That doesn't mean to spread a sugar coating of insincerity over your words. No matter whether you are behind the counter, in the show room, or in Mrs. Jones' house, your job is to show hospitality—you play the part of the host. Radiate the spirit of welcome and friendliness.

How do you say, "Good morning"? If you say it as though you'd like to throw a bucket of cold water over the guy that woke you up, you're no salesman. Let that greeting have a ring of welcome, rather than "Mister, I'd like to skin you."

Of course, you may not always feel cheerful. But you, as a salesman, must at least pretend to feel that all's right with the world. It is your job to keep your spirits up. If you want to be sure that your good-morning isn't belligerent, put an upward inflection on the tail end of it. Like this:

"Good mornin<sup>g</sup>!"

Try putting that snappy little upward inflection at the end. It helps. Of course, you mustn't overdo it, or your greeting will sound like either a question or an apology. Keep the meaning in it.

A great deal of the friendliness in your voice comes directly and naturally from your point of view. It's all in the

way you look at things. You are walking along the street, when you see a little boy seven years old pulling a puppy's ears. There are two things you can do. You can concentrate on the boy's barbarous treatment of the dog, and feel irritated. As a result, you snap: "Hey, kid! Cut that out!" Or you can concentrate your sympathy on the puppy and how to get him out of his painful predicament without a squabble. In that case you probably say in a tone of sympathy—for the dog—"Sonny, don't pull the puppy's ears. That hurts."

You probably will get the same result either way. But the first way demands the voice with a personal rebuke. Poor salesmanship.

Take a lesson in putting that smile in your voice from some of our telephone switchboard operators, especially the long-distance girls. Or listen to the warm note of hospitality in the voices of some of our Southerners. There's a little eating place near where we live, staffed entirely by southern boys. It's not much of a place, compared with some of its competitors: breakfasts, sandwiches, coffee, and pie. But the place is jammed day and night. What's the answer? Those southern lads put the smile in their voices. Staid middle-aged ladies and university coeds alike succumb to those pleasant tones and buy hamburgers by the sack. Business men, day laborers, and university professors go there because there's something relaxing about the place.

Some restaurant owners have receptionists. Nearly all of these girls—whose job is simply to get customers to tables—are experts in this voice-with-a-smile technique. We know one restaurant where the business depends al-

most as much upon the voice with a smile as upon good juicy steaks. Get that human touch into your voice. It is necessary for that sure-footed feeling in speech.

4. **Have an interesting voice.**—When you talk conversationally, do people listen to you in an interested manner because your voice is pleasant and colorful? The great orator, Wendell Phillips, held the interest of his audience not only by what he said, but by his pleasing and fascinating voice. It is said of him that he was like an infernal machine set to music.

Monotony is the common fault of an uninteresting voice. It is difficult to imagine just how irritating and painfully annoying monotony can be.

The ancient Chinese invented several interesting and extremely painful tortures based on just this principle of monotony. One was called the water-torture. The victim was tied in such a position that he was comfortable enough, but couldn't move. Then, once every few seconds a drop of water was let fall on his forehead. Another variation of the torture consisted in tapping the victim very lightly with a bamboo cane at regular periods. Still another consisted of striking the same note on a bell at definite intervals. None of those things sound very terrible, and they aren't—for the space of an hour or so. But after that the terrible monotony begins to tell. The victim begins to wonder when that next stroke of the bell will come; unconsciously he braces himself against it. And when the bell is struck, he flinches. Every repetition of the act wears deeper on his nerves and his body until the torture becomes so acute that it is the worst of all imaginable punishments. It is entirely

possible to kill a man with one of these terrible monotony-tortures.

Now notice that the salesman with a monotonous voice is inflicting just this sort of torture on his customers. It's not so subtle, and it doesn't last so long, but the customer reacts to that kind of sales voice just as he would react to the water-torture. As the salesman talks on, the customer picks out the monotonous pattern in his speaking; he begins to watch for it. He can't pay attention to what the salesman says, because his whole consciousness is occupied with the increasingly unpleasant monotony of the man's voice. As the sales situation progresses, the customer becomes more nervous, irritable, and ill at ease. Monotony in the voice is a sure sale killer.

Monotony does not mean that you speak all on one tone. It lies in the pattern of speaking which you use. Let's find an example. Remember the first four notes of "The Star-Spangled Banner"—a kind of tumty-tum-tum-tum-TUM effect? Now that phrase in itself isn't monotonous. There is change in rate; the *tumty*, which consists of two notes, takes about as long to play as the *tum*. There is change in pitch, for all the notes are not on the same level. But, suppose that we began to play that phrase over and over and over again: tumty-tum-tum-tum-TUM, tumty-tum-tum-tum-TUM, and so forth. After about five minutes of that repetition you would start tearing your hair and yelling, "Shut that blamed thing off!" Why? Monotony. And that's the kind of monotony you may easily get in your voice. You work out a little pattern unconsciously, a pattern which might possibly be compared to a phrase in music, and you proceed to use it over and over and over

again. This is sometimes called "faulty melody." This is what we mean when we say, "You have a ministerial tone." There is also the politician's tone, the lawyer's tone, the school teacher's tone, the newsboy's tone, the salesman's tone, and so on.

To end this water-torture brand of sales talking, you need to inject a little conversational variety into your voice. That is, you want to put a little extra expression into some of your phrases. And that calls for two things.

The first is, constant attention to what you are saying. To remark that you, a salesman, know your product is nothing especially new. In the first place, you have studied that product until you know it backward and forward. You have to do that before you can try to sell. In the second place, you go through the routine of explaining your product to dozens of customers every day, day on day, month on month. There is a constant temptation for you to let this knowledge go stale, to let your voice pick its way through the well-worn paths of your sales talk, finding a monotonous little pattern, repeating it and repeating and repeating . . .

That is the expert salesman's problem. If, by some chance, you are a beginning salesman who has learned a mass of technical or semi-technical data about a product, none of which makes too much sense, then you have another problem with regard to monotony. This problem is not nearly as rare as you think. Listen to the great majority of average salesmen who try to sell machinery of some sort: typewriters, cameras, cars, guns, what have you. Most of them have simply learned sentences from the book put out by the company. They never bother to find out

what the sentences stand for. And, being beautifully innocent of the meaning of the words, they drone them out impressively . . . and monotonously.

In either case, the difficulty is lack of understanding of what you are saying. If you are a veteran salesman whose sales talk is something closer than second nature, if you are a green salesman with a memory full of fine phrases . . . be careful! Understand what you are saying! Think of what you are saying as you say it! Otherwise you'll be just another of the great army of "water-torture salesmen."

The second thing you need to combat monotony is a little practice by yourself. Use that very expressive slang phrase, "Oh, yeah?" See how many meanings you can get from those two words, just by the way you say them. And here are the other phrases: "Why, you silly little fool," or "Why, Mister Boone, you surprise me."

Exaggerate the manner in which you speak these phrases in practice just to limber up your voice mechanism. Of course, when you are on the sales firing line, you can't go to these extremes in vocal gymnastics, but you can color up your voice a good deal. Be sure to be natural and sincere. Fire every phrase with meaning and you will soon discover ways of using an interesting voice. (For further study see exercises for flexibility and color, pages 77-78.)

5. Is your speech fluent?—Or do you stammer and stutter like a motor on a cold morning? A voice which has magnetic fluency, which rides the very crest of each wave of ideas, is in itself captivating. It gives the customer a feeling that the salesman is absolute master of the situation. It is an earmark of good salesmanship.

Magnetic fluency in a voice doesn't mean mere glibness. It means a smooth, accurate, and sensitive presentation of ideas.

Everyone stammers occasionally. If your boss walks up to you and says, "Jones, your department is losing money regularly. What's the matter?" you don't in the normal course of affairs, rap out a direct, to-the-point answer. Instead you hem and haw a bit. "Well, now, er-uh, it's like this . . ." That's stammering as it affects a great many of us. Everyone stammers at times and it has been estimated that common stammering costs Americans a billion dollars a year. Certainly it costs salesmen a great deal.

Your professional life is not the only place where stammering is important. You walk into your bank to ask for a two-hundred-dollar loan, fully confident that you'll get it. Instead, your banker raps, "Well, we can't let you have it. What do you want with the money?" And you're floored. You have all the magnetic fluency of an oyster on the half shell. You stammer, you clear your throat and you find that you have lost, for the moment at least, that sales touch.

You drive along the street. Suddenly you hear a siren just behind your left ear, and a traffic cop waves you to the curb. In an officious manner he says, "What the hell's the idea of doin' forty on this street?" If you can do more than gulp and mutter to yourself in such a case, you're a better man than most.

Probably the most damaging solar-plexus punch that your magnetic fluency ever is dealt comes when you find yourself in love. Now mind you, you've been going with

this girl for a year. You know her about as well as you know any of your friends. And now you've laid ten dollars "on the line" to take her to one of those super-special dances, and you intend to propose to her. You spend hours in advance trying to put together a few simple phrases that will get the job done. But when the zero hour shows up, the best imitation of human conversation you can produce sounds like the efforts of a second-rate spiritualist on an off night.

These are extreme examples, of course. But in every sales situation you will find stumbling blocks of one sort or another which will ruin the magnetic fluency of your voice, destroy your customer's confidence in you, and lose sales for you—if you don't avoid them.

Now notice that the bane of magnetic fluency is hesitation. That doesn't mean that a pause in your speaking now and then isn't good. It is. You don't want to gabble on in a constant stream, like a garden hose squirting water over the lawn. Stop once in a while and let your words sink in. But don't hesitate! A pause is an intentional stop; a hesitation is the ghost of a pause. The great trouble with the man who hesitates is that he doesn't simply stop dead. He stops because, for some reason, he can't think what to say next. At the same time he feels that he should make some sound, just to let his listener know that he hasn't finished. So instead of saying anything, he grunts or groans, he says, "er-r-r-r" or "uh," or he combines the two into "er-uh." Nothing is more painfully apparent than the fact that the hesitator is not sure of himself, or what he is talking about, or both. The "uh" habit is a sure killer of your customer's confidence.

You can cultivate a vocal magnetic fluency which will captivate your listener, whether he or she is a prospective customer, an irritable traffic cop, or a prospective wife. Here again, the solution is one of practice. For five or ten minutes every day read aloud some well-written passage in prose or verse. Imagine that you are reading over a national radio hookup, and that a break in your fluency will cause discomfort to millions of listeners. Keep that objective of fluency which expresses ideas before you. Keep up the practice. Or you can try an old speaker's exercise. Pick out five minutes every morning that you can spend in developing fluency. Go to your bedroom window and look out. Call the first object that you see by name, and then talk about it for two minutes by the clock. Describe it, comment upon its size, shape, color, weight, its use, etc. Tell why you like it or dislike it. Keep going for two minutes without a break, whether you talk sense or not, whether you keep to the subject or talk beside the point. Just keep that talk flowing. After you've exhausted the objects which you can see from one window, tackle another. Then start on the objects in your room. After a time, you will discover that you can talk fluently and sensibly about a great many things on the spur of the moment. Given the knowledge of your product which you should have, and magnetic fluency will be an essential characteristic of a sure-footed sales voice.

6. How about your personality?—Up to now we have been talking about pretty definite, common characteristics of the sales voice, things which every salesman should have. Some of these characteristics may be present in your

voice, helping you to get more sales. Others may not. Our suggestion in this book is, of course, that you spend some time in trying to find out just where your voice is good and where it is bad. Then compare it with the characteristics of the good sales voice which we have listed. This will help you to get a picture of your own voice.

But after you have done all this, after you have made definite voice improvement, there still remains one question to ask: does your voice express your personality? Personalities are the most interesting things in the world. Your personality is interesting to your customer, and it will make him buy from you because he is interested.

Yet, interesting and valuable as personalities are, they are elusive and intangible things. We cannot give you finger exercises for making your voice express your personality better. If you use the suggestions and exercises which we have already set down here together with those in the last chapter, you should be able to turn your voice into a more effective tool for expressing your ideas together with your personality.

We would make one suggestion, however. Be yourself! Be natural! Don't try to assume strange and wonderful accents by way of showing that you have a "cultivated" voice. You live in a certain section of this country, which has certain idioms and a certain accent. Use those idioms and that accent. When in Rome not only do as the Romans do—but as much as possible talk like the Romans.

We hear a great deal of "our terrible American voices"—how the Kansan twangs and the Yankee pinches his voice and the man from Massachusetts talks through a mouthful of mush, and so on. It's true that we have these

sectional differences in language, and that some local speech characteristics are none too beautiful. But we feel that most of the faults in our speech are due to individual carelessness and ignorance far more than to any of these sectional differences.

Use the speech of the people with whom you deal. Use it in as effective and pleasing a manner as you can. Eliminate your own speech faults as far as possible, and for the rest—be natural—be sincere!

Fill your voice with your sincere thoughts and feelings. Let your voice be the prism through which your real self may at all times be seen. Keep the real “you” in your voice and you will get along in a sure-footed manner.

## CHAPTER 5

### YOUR TELEPHONE VOICE

The spoken word has always been man's number one means of communication. Long before the written word appeared, men grunted or talked together, helped the words out with a liberal dosage of gestures. Not until human civilization was well under way did men take to writing. And then only a few of them learned the art of making those curious scratches which conveyed a meaning. Even today, a comparatively small proportion of people read and write, in spite of the great printing presses which help us to preserve and communicate with others our ideas and feelings.

For thousands of years men went on using their voices to convey ideas. Once in a while they thought how wonderful it would be if a man could speak so loudly that people many miles away would hear him. They put that idea in their fairy tales, and then forgot about it. The unlimited projection of the voice was a miracle, a fantastic dream. It couldn't happen.

The miracle was finally performed about a half-century ago, when Alexander Bell, an elocution teacher who tinkered with machinery as a hobby, used the magic power of electricity to convey a human voice over a wire. Nowadays a telephone is a common part of almost every home and business establishment in America.

In telephone usage, the United States leads the world. The President's American flows over more wires in greater quantity than any other language. If you put a hundred thousand Americans beside a hundred thousand people of any other nation, the Americans would own and use thirteen telephones where the people of other nationalities used one. We have only one-twentieth of the world's area, but we have more than one-half of the world's telephones. In this country we have twenty-five billion telephone conversations every year and nearly a billion long-distance calls. More and more, as these staggering figures pile up and increase, the telephone is being looked on as an effective and necessary tool in carrying on the work of the business world.

Unnumbered are the uses of the telephone: it is a social tool, for visiting and gossiping, for making love and spreading news. But more than this, the telephone has become the nervous system of the American business world. If all the telephones were suddenly put out of order, the business world would be paralyzed in forty-eight hours—just as you would be paralyzed in about thirty seconds, if your nervous system were put out of order. The telephone is constantly used for transmitting and acknowledging orders, for making appointments, for buying, for selling, for adjusting claims and creating good will, for promoting financial ventures, making collections, dispatching shipments of goods—and so on, through an endless list of business transactions.

And what is the one physical tool which you use in doing business by telephone? Your voice. Nothing else. *Here the voice is all-important.*

Over the telephone, your voice is essentially *you*. As far as the man on the other end of the line is concerned, there is nothing else to you. The customer can't see you. He can't tell how you are dressed. He can't see your genial smile or your facial expression. Yet, in a sense, you are "face-to-face" with that man; because his imagination seizes on the sound of your voice, and from it constructs a picture of you. If you want your customer to have a favorable impression of you, then you must put everything you have into your telephone sales voice!

Did you ever talk to some person, whom you had never seen, over the telephone? When you hung up the receiver, you unconsciously formed a decision about that person. You may have said, "Well . . . I like him!" Or you may simply have grumbled "Sour puss!" Here, for instance, are two men with whom you have a telephone acquaintance—John and Jack. You have never seen either of them, but you have heard them a hundred times. *And you know them, from hearing them.* When John calls, you immediately feel comfortable. You feel that he is glad to meet you. You feel that he has a smile on his face. He seems to be interested in you. He is attentive. When you get through talking, you feel pleased with yourself and pleased with John. Then there is Jack. He's a horse of another color, verbally speaking. He may not mean to be gruff, but he is. He talks loudly. He is curt and abrupt in his manner of speaking. He seems to be cold and indifferent toward you. All in all, there is something about Jack's voice that isn't pleasant. Now perhaps if you met John and Jack, you would find them both very likable gentlemen—but it's not that way on the telephone!

A well-known manufacturer once said, "Whenever I need a new girl in the office, I insist that applicants call me on the telephone first before I interview them. If their voices do not sound clear and pleasant, I don't bother to make an appointment for a personal interview." Another prominent business man once made the remark, "The people over at A Manufacturing Company are fine people to do business with. I have never been there but I have talked with them by telephone."

The whole matter comes down to this: the telephone is an essential part of modern business; as a salesman, you must use the telephone constantly and effectively; over the telephone, the only tool you can rely on is the voice. The importance of that statement cannot be overstressed. Sometimes when you meet people face-to-face, you can make a favorable impression with a winning smile, a warm handshake, or attractive personal appearance—but over the telephone, your voice and only your voice is you!

We cannot give you a magical formula that will, presto-chango! make you a complete success in telephone selling. But we can set down a few rules which should help you to improve your telephone sales voice.

1. **Know your instrument!**—Your telephone isn't tailored to your measure, like a hundred-dollar suit of clothes. It is a mechanical device made according to a common pattern with the idea of suiting the average person who uses it. Again, it is geared to the normal speaking tone of the voice. Remember these things when you speak into the telephone. If you do, you will speak directly into the transmitter, from a range of about half an inch. You will use

plenty of lip action, to avoid mumbling or chewing up your words. You will use a normal amount of volume, rather than bellowing into the transmitter. Most of the "gruffness" and "grouchiness" over the telephone is largely due to the fact that the speaker is using too much volume.

When you use the telephone, keep in mind the "telephone-situation." If you wait too long to answer calls, the person on the other end of the line may hang up. Courtesy demands that you respond as promptly as possible. When you talk, remember that the person at the other end of the line cannot see you, and that you must compensate for this by speaking clearly and distinctly. We will say more about this fact later in the chapter. When the telephone conversation is over, the last thing you do is gently hang up the receiver.

Salesmanship must have the personal touch. To get that intimate and personal touch over the telephone it will help you to visualize the person with whom you are talking. Forget you are using a mechanical device. Although the person on the other end of the line may be hundreds of miles away, try to make him feel that you are right there with him only a few feet away.

**2. Use good business etiquette.**—The telephone is primarily used for business purposes; therefore, be business-like in your manner. This does not mean that you have to be abrupt or blunt in your manner. Remember that courtesy is the number one rule of good business practice. And there is no excuse for discourtesy on the telephone, where it cannot be easily perceived by the offender, and where it cannot be made up for by a pleasant smile or a

winning manner. There are certain telephone formalities which are courteous, which save time, which help to get to the point and deal efficiently with the matter at hand.

When you place a call, be sure that you are ready to talk. It is very impolite to make a call and then force the person called to wait for the privilege of talking with you.

Always allow plenty of time for the other man to answer. You should, when you make a call, allow at least a minute for the other person to get to the telephone. The additional few seconds you may spend here will save you minutes and hours which would be lost if you were forced to call again and again.

It is always good etiquette to ask the customer if it is convenient for him to talk. That is merely common-sense courtesy. You may be breaking into an important business conference. The person you call may be rushed with work at the moment. If that is the case, forcing him to spend time with you is only making the wrong sales approach. Your respect for his time and convenience, on the other hand, may help make sales for you.

Pay attention while you talk; listen politely and attentively. Never let your mind wander while you have a receiver to your ear. When you speak to a person face-to-face, you are careful to concentrate your full attention on him and what he says. Observe this same rule in telephone conversations.

When you get the wrong number, apologize for the mistake, whether it is your fault or not. And when someone calls you by mistake, try to answer as pleasantly as you can.

In fact, business courtesy demands that you be always pleasant when you answer a telephone. You don't know who is on the other end of that wire. It may be your best friend or your best customer; and if you snap, snarl or roar into that receiver, the person who hears you is very likely to revise his opinion of you. So . . . whenever you receive a call, extend the same courtesy to the caller that you would if a friend knocked at the door of your home.

Be definite in your salutation. For business purposes, forget the old-fashioned "Hello." Identify yourself, your firm or department. Say, "Mr. Jones." Or, "Mr. Jones speaking." Say, "Brown Shoe Company," or "Brown Shoe Company, Mr. Jones speaking," or "Shipping Department, Mr. Adams speaking." Many times you will be answering calls for others. This form is correct: "I'm sorry, Mr. Jones is out of the city. May I tell him you called?" Or say, "When Mr. Jones returns, may I tell him you called?" Or use this phraseology: "Mr. Jones isn't here now. May I take a message for him?"

The close of the business telephone conversation is important. When you are finished, who should end the call? If you represent a business firm, and are calling on customers, it is best for you to allow the customer to hang up first. On the other hand, if you as a customer telephone a business firm to make a purchase or ask for information, it is preferable that you hang up first. Remember the rule of courtesy in hanging up the receiver. Hang up gently—if you slam the receiver, you seem rude and discourteous to the person on the other end of the line. It is bad manners to slam a receiver on the hook. It is like slamming the door in a guest's face.

**3. Make yourself understood.**—This means, first of all, to speak distinctly. It means to give every syllable and sound accurate and careful execution. The organs of distinct telephone diction are the jaws, the lips, the teeth, and the tongue. If the muscles of your lips or jaw or tongue are lazy and stiff, you will not be understood. To understand how this works, try a little experiment. Open your mouth very slightly; now try to speak a few lines without moving your tongue or jaw. You will find that your voice is muffled; the sounds are blurred and fuzzy; the words are indistinct and unrecognizable; now try the same experiment with the jaw more flexible, and note the difference.

So close is the connection between the distinctness of your speech and the movements of your facial muscles, that a trained deaf-mute can watch your lips and understand what you say. More than this, if he cannot see your lips, he can "read" your speech almost equally well by watching the movement of your jaw muscles. So be sure, when you talk over the telephone, that your jaw, tongue, and lips are alive and flexible.

Besides this, you should learn to recognize and watch for those sounds that can be mistaken over the telephone. You have heard telephone operators pronounce the number nine as niyen. This is, of course, an exaggerated pronunciation—but a necessary one. Operators have discovered that nine (pronounced nine) is easily mistaken for five; and that O (when pronounced "oh") is often mistaken for four. Over the telephone we use numbers a great deal. The Southwestern Bell Telephone Company gives the following simple directions as a guide for pronouncing telephone numbers.

*Numeral or**Letter**Sounded as**Principal Sounds*

0	oh	Round and long O
1	wun	Strong W and N
2	too	Strong T and long OO
3	th-r-ee	A single roll of the R and Long EE
4	fower	Strong F, long O, and strong final R
5	fi-iv	I changing from long to short, strong V
6	siks	Strong S and KS
7	sev-ven	Strong S and V, and well sounded EN
8	ate	Strong A and strong T
9	nijen	Strong N, long I, and well rounded EN
10	ten	Strong T and N
J	jay	Strong J and long AY
R	ahr	Strong R
M	em	Short E and strong M
W	dubble-you	Full value given to every syllable
F	ef	Short E and strong F

Your speaking rate is important to the distinctness of your telephone voice. How fast should you speak? The rate of normal conversation is no good measure. When you are face-to-face with another person, he can watch the play of your facial expression, the explanatory movements of your hands and body, and from these things he can get a great deal of your meaning, even if you are speaking very rapidly. But over the telephone, if he misses a word or a phrase due to your speed, it is gone forever. So it is extremely important that you speak deliberately and understandably.

Actually, you save time if you speak so that your customer can hear and understand you, so that he will not be forced to ask you to repeat. Some people—who make few long-distance calls—have the idea that they must talk with machine-gun rapidity if they are to get their money's worth.

Of course that is not true. Talking a blue streak means repetition and waste of time. In normal speech over the telephone you should speak about 125 words a minute—no faster. If you run over that, you are in danger of jumbling syllables and words together.

To sum up: if you want to be understood easily over the telephone, loosen up your facial muscles and speak deliberately. Here are a few easy exercises to improve the use of your lips, tongue, and jaw.

Plan 1. *Lip exercises.* Start with your lips closed, as though you were going to say "papa." Then sound only the letter P. Repeat this rapidly several times. Then combine the P with several words which have open vowels, such as "pay, posy," and so forth. Now use the letter B in the same manner—first pronouncing it alone and then combining it with open-vowel sounds such as "bay, base, bo," and so forth. Repeat sentences in which there are many initial P's and B's, such as "The big black bug bit a big black bear" and "Papa paid Mr. Pepper for the papers."

Plan 2. *Tongue exercises.* With the mouth relaxed, curve the tip of your tongue. Put it out as far as it will go, then draw it back again. Do this ten times. Now repeat slowly, "lāy, lee, lie, lōw, lōō," increasing your tempo until you are going as rapidly as possible. Try repeating successive sounds, like "tah, nah, lah."

Plan 3. *Jaw exercises.* Yawn heartily and try to relax the muscles of the lower jaw. Then repeat energetically the sounds "wā, wōh, wōō," first in an effusive manner, then more rapidly in a staccato manner.

4. **Have a voice with a smile.**—On the telephone, the voice with a smile wins! Telephone operators are trained to use the voice with a courteous, friendly tone. Getting the smile into your telephone voice is chiefly a matter of feeling right. You should feel pleasant, you should feel interested in what you have to say, and you should feel interested in what the other man has to say. If you feel pleasant, you will not sound bored or mechanical; you will be enthusiastic, and you will suggest a certain personal interest in the man to whom you are speaking. If you are interested in what you have to say, your voice will not lack for color, for those shades of meaning which are conveyed through rising and falling inflections, for the quality of convincingness. Even the way you pronounce the name of your company will become important. You will put a quality of friendliness into the commonplace phrase, "Anything I can do for you?" If you are interested in what the customer has to say, you will visualize him as you speak to him—and you will speak *to* him and not *at* him. You will use a natural tone of voice, and you will probably call him by name as much as possible.

5. **Keep your sales sense.**—Your telephone conversation must naturally be brief and to the point. Because of the businesslike nature of selling by telephone you should more than ever observe the rules of salesmanship. There are at least five rules deeply rooted in sound psychological law that you should keep in mind.

Don't try to do all the talking. Give the other man a chance to say what he has in mind—to raise objections, to ask questions. Let him feel that he is doing the buying.

Don't interrupt your customer while he is talking. Don't let him feel that you are impatient. Don't finish a sentence for him or give the impression that you are trying to help him out. Don't try to hurry him along while he is talking to you.

Don't be personal or belligerent. Be businesslike but don't be too aggressive. Talk up the merits of what you are selling and give the reasons why your customer should buy, but never be personal about any of his objections or refusals.

When the customer objects, state his objection verbatim. He will feel complimented that you understand him and that you have his idea straight.

Use conversational strategy to get to the crucial point of what you are talking about. Lead up to this point as soon as possible and then center the sales conversation around it. Don't let the sale-making talk drag along aimlessly. Get some kind of action one way or another with reasonable promptness.

**6. Put your personality into your voice!**—The telephone is, in its way, a dangerous instrument. You cannot see the man to whom you are talking. Consequently you are likely to feel that you needn't expend any energy in the conversation, except what is absolutely needed to speak a few words. You needn't take the trouble to put yourself into what you say. Consequently again, a good telephone personality is something rare in the business world.

If you want, as a salesman, to use the telephone—and you must, every day of your life—then put your personality into your voice! That means complete attention to and

concentration on what you say. When you speak over the telephone, your eyes have nothing to fix on, and they often wander; don't let your mind wander with them! Be attentive, be frank, be sincere—and above all, make every word count.

We were playing tennis one day, when a famous athletic coach was standing behind the backstop. As he threw back a stray ball, he made a remark which we still remember vividly: "Young man, never make a careless shot." That hit our pride . . . and it should hit yours. When you talk over the telephone, never say a careless line, never for a moment be careless or indifferent about what you are saying or the impression that you are making. Remember—you are out to get tangible business results, and getting them requires careful concentration.

If you like your information boiled down and packaged in small capsules, then let us, in closing this chapter, give you two quotations which contain important advice for anyone who talks over the telephone. The first is by Alexander Graham Bell, a great voice teacher and the inventor of the telephone: "Consonants give intelligibility to speech, and vowels give beauty of utterance. Consonants constitute the backbone of language, vowels the flesh and blood. You cannot do without them."

The other quotation offering excellent counsel we found in an out-of-the-way telephone booth of a drug store in a Kansas town. It reads: "First of all, remember to speak clearly, quietly, and distinctly, directly into the mouth-piece, your lips about half an inch away. Always be courteous. Don't sound too bored and tired to say another word, and don't chatter on inaudibly."

## YOU SELL WITH YOUR VOICE

## WHAT'S YOUR TELEPHONE SCORE? \*

For each "yes" answer give yourself five points. For each "sometimes," two points. No score for a "no" answer. Add up your total. 90 to 100 is excellent, 80 to 89 is good, 70 to 79 is fair. Below 70 is unsatisfactory.

## Do You?

1. Know the number
2. Allow time to answer
3. Ask if convenient to talk
4. Speak directly into transmitter
5. Speak in a natural tone
6. Visualize the person
7. Say "Thank you" and "You're welcome"
8. Listen attentively
9. Use the customer's name
10. Explain waits
11. Apologize for mistakes
12. Answer promptly
13. Greet the caller pleasantly
14. Identify yourself properly
15. Leave word where you're going
16. Ask questions tactfully
17. Take the message
18. Signal the operator slowly
19. End the call properly
20. Replace receiver gently

TOTAL

[illegible]

\* Score Card prepared by the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

## CHAPTER 6

### YOUR VOICE AND THE SALES GAME

The most important rule in the selling game is to know human nature. Human beings behave at times in a most curious manner, often without rhyme or reason. Yet back of all human actions are those secret springs and push buttons which control every move we make. Your job as a salesman is to finger around behind the scenes, manipulating these secret springs and push buttons which make people do certain things, to sign up, to buy, to get others to buy, to trade, to say a good word for you, and so on. You can do this with your voice. Unfortunately, we cannot lay out a complete, simple magic formula or a list of instructions for you to follow so that you will be able at all times to press the right buttons and pull the right strings. We will designate a few common-sense principles or rules which will help your voice be more successful as you play this selling game.

**1. Getting on the blind side.**—You have heard about blind spots. Blind spots are handy things to know about in the selling game. Take your lesson from the old farm horse. Dobbin, like many other horses, was hard to bridle unless you knew how to approach him. He had a blind side and if you slipped up on his blind side, he was so gentle a child could bridle him. Some high-spirited race horses are so tricky and foxy that you have to create blind

spots by putting blinders on them. This enlarges the area of blind spots. People, like horses, have their blind sides.

Did you ever fish for trout? If you have, you know there are blind spots for them. An experienced angler will stand between his game and the rising or setting sun. In this position the trout are blind to the fisherman but they can see the flies on the water.

In aerial combat during the war, blind spots were a nightmare to pilots and observers on airships and balloons.

Remember that in getting on the blind side of your customer, it is the first impression that is most important. It is always a good rule to use a friendly, quiet, sincere tone in your speech, but at no time is this rule as important as during the opening moments of a sales conference. During these moments be sure that you do nothing with your voice which will make the customer brace himself against an attack which he anticipates. Make a favorable attempt to win his confidence. Step up on the blind side quietly but firmly. Don't bark at him, let him do the barking. If he is gruff in his manner, remember that a soft answer "turneth away wrath." Don't be too eager in your manner or too dramatic in your expression. Don't be too aggressive nor too obvious in your purpose. And after the first few moments of strangeness have worn off and you warm up in your sales talk, then you may gradually proceed with more vigor and force in your sales tactics.

2. Use the standard brand of speech.—When you are in Rome, talk like the Romans. When you are in Kansas, talk like the Kansans. If you are a native of Kansas, you probably won't think much of the broad a's and the Bos-

tonian drawl. Even a typical Pennsylvanian thinks an Englishman sounds unnatural and unreal. Of course, if you have a natural brogue because you are accustomed to speaking another language, that is an entirely different matter. But a salesman with English as his mother tongue should try to speak the language of those with whom he deals, otherwise he will sound unnatural and artificial. Keep in tune with your surroundings. That is, use the standard brand of speech.

**3. This business of ego-scratching.**—Ask yourself this question: what is the thing that everybody wants? the thing that doesn't cost me a red cent to give? the thing whose lack makes people go insane?

It's the biggest selling force in the world: the human ego. We all want people to think us important. We all want to think ourselves important. And the less important we really are, the more we need someone to scratch that ego. If you as a salesman can become adept at stimulating your customers' egos, you will be a great success. Many a man has spent his last dime to reward the person who made him feel important.

The voice is your most effective tool in this business of ego-scratching. You can't say, "Mrs. Jones, that hat makes you look even younger than you really are," if your voice implies that Mrs. Jones is looking a rather decrepit seventy, and her hat resembles something that has been fished out of the junk heap. For the moment at least, you must make yourself believe that Mrs. Jones is looking a youngish twenty-five, and that her hat is just the sort of thing your favorite movie actress would choose.

Then, there is ego-scratching in the manner of using your customer's name. The sweetest sound in the world is the sound of your own name and the simplest way to appeal to your customer's pride and feeling of self-importance is to play up his name. All people are sensitive about their names. If you have a customer who has an unpronounceable name, you have more than an even chance to flatter him if you can pronounce his name correctly because he seldom hears it pronounced that way. If his name is simple and common, then you should be more cautious than ever to pronounce it correctly lest you insult him. If you have a customer named Smythe, for heaven's sake never call him Smith. He may have packed dozens of suppressed social desires in that Smythe, and if you call him Smith you are not only casting a reflection upon him but upon his entire family tree. Even people who have no psychological reason for it want to hear their names pronounced correctly.

For example, there is our friend named Simons—with a long i—who positively gets red in the face with rage when called Simmons. There is the gentleman named Field who flashes in anger if he is called Fields. We don't want to introduce too personal a note here, but one of your authors is named Maloney, and the man who barely suggests an initial "B" instead of an "M" is flirting with real trouble.

And then we come to the clan Guggenheimer. These people are peculiarly susceptible to good vocalization of their name, because they so seldom get it.

When you approach a customer, *know* his name and how to pronounce it. Even practice saying it so that you

give full importance to each syllable. Lift that name and set it on a pedestal. The name "Guggenheimer"—give it four full syllables, and each syllable its own value. Don't say, as a careless salesman will, "Mrs. Gu'-n'eim'r." Even when you have a prosaic, ordinary name like Smith, lift the name of Smith by using more vocal play on the word Mister. The word Smith alone doesn't give you much chance—but say, "*Mister* Smith, now let me explain," and you have something.

Names of your customer's children may be as important as his or her own name, and perhaps more important. To give a stick of gum to little Johnny is too obvious—that's like the politician kissing babies. But to be able to speak the names of Mrs. Jones' children in a beautiful, effective manner is a very subtle way of flattering Mrs. Jones. And Mrs. Jones is the one who does the buying—not the children.

Finally, there are the names of towns. Most people—especially those from smaller cities—have a good deal of civic pride. The name of their home town is music to their ears. Watch your chance and work the name of that home town into the conversation. Here again, lift the name so that it has more beauty and charm than the rest of your talk.

And remember this: in this business of ego-scratching, you needn't do all the work yourself. The customer has a voice, and nine times out of ten he will be delighted to use it to scratch his own ego. Most people love the sound of their own voices, and it is peculiarly pleasant for the customer to discover in you a sympathetic and intelligent listener.

**4. Vocal smothering.**—Don't smother your customer with too much voice. Were you ever in a conversation in which one person not only monopolized all the talk but beat the others down with his vocal aggressiveness? There are some salesmen who keep pouring out vocal sounds incessantly. They practise a kind of forced intellectual feeding. Anyone subjected to this kind of pressure will naturally feel unbearably crowded. He will want to revolt. Guard against this overaggressiveness of voice and speech. Oh, yes, it might work occasionally to get a high-pressure job done; but if you make a sale using such vocal tactics, remember, it will be your last one with that particular customer. If all of your customers were Caspar Milquetoasts, the domineering voice might work, but with most people you are on the wrong psychological track, you are rubbing them the wrong way.

**5. Watch your tempo.**—How fast do you talk? Watch your speaking tempo, for millions of dollars are lost in sales every day because hundreds of thousands of salesmen talk too fast. It is only natural that in your anxiety to make a sale you should be tempted to talk too fast. You may become impatient with your customer because he is slow to understand, but you must remember that you know much more about your product. You know all the facts, all the selling points. You know all the answers, but what about your customer? The chances are he is not so familiar with the thing that you are selling. In fact, he often doesn't know what he really wants. He is in somewhat of a daze, shopping around, looking for bargains, so naturally he is going to take his time. He is spending his hard-earned

dollars and his motto is "Stop, look, listen." Although you may be in a hurry to sell, he is in no hurry to buy. That is why it is easy for you to be two jumps ahead of him in your sales talk. So take it easy, Mr. Salesman. Check yourself and try to adjust your speaking pace to the listening pace of your customer.

**6. The whining tone.**—You've walked along the streets of a city only to find some shabby-looking fellow suddenly in step with you, and you've heard him say: "Mister, can you spare a dime for a cuppa cawfee? I ain't et since yesterday mornin'." What is the effect of that whining, miserable tone of voice on you? It makes you irritable, doesn't it? You might give the man a dime out of sympathy, but more likely you do it to be rid of him. You don't like that tone of voice. That whining tone gives you the jitters.

What do we mean when we say, "Ah! he is a whiner"? We simply mean that he is a complainer, that he feels sorry for himself. And usually a whiner carries a chip on his shoulder. The whining voice is self-centered. It says, "Buy this, not because you want it or need it but because I want you to buy it." This is in direct opposition to the law of selling. You are pumping up the wrong ego. If you are a whiner you are trying to inflate your own ego instead of the customer's. It is only natural for the customer to rebel when that perpendicular letter "I" stands straight up and starts begging and pleading.

**7. That psychological moment.**—Every great actor worries about the climax of the show. It is said that actors fondle the climaxes of their performances as a mother fondles a newborn babe. The actor knows that success or

failure is wrapped up in every climax. Mr. Salesman, take your lesson from the actor who has spent years mastering the tricks of handling the climaxes of big dramatic scenes. These are the crucial spots for him. Every sale is in a sense a little dramatic act. You have a climax in every sale situation. It is often called "the psychological moment." It is that time when you win or lose a sale. It is the vulnerable spot for the salesman, for it marks the place where dollars and cents roll out before you or go glimmering from your view.

How often have you been in a spot like this? You and Mrs. Jones, your prospective customer, are going ring-around-a-rosey. She hasn't said yes, she hasn't said no. You know that you have been tactful, courteous, convincing. You instinctively feel that there is a good chance to sell her. Mrs. Jones will buy—if you can say the right thing.

But suddenly, without warning, right on the heels of your most hopeful moment, you sense that something has gone wrong. You feel that you are up against a stone wall. Mrs. Jones hasn't said "No" but you are convinced by her general attitude that what looked to be a promising sale is turning out to be a dud.

You wonder what you have done. You thought you were careful to be courteous and pleasant in the face of all her evasions. And yet Mrs. Jones shows unmistakable evidence that she is annoyed and irritated.

What is the thing that went wrong just at the climax; what has ruined a perfectly good sales build-up? Here's what it was. That voice of yours, which registers most sensitively your inner feelings and your physical condition

—your voice betrayed you. Your tone language was stronger than your word language.

Maybe you were the first to become impatient. When she evaded you time and again you became irritated, you unconsciously gave yourself away in your voice. There were those hints of unfriendliness and impatience which Mrs. Jones instinctively sensed. You are not a good enough actor to cover up your inner feelings. Remember, your voice is a highly sensitized barometer of your personality and your thoughts. It reflects accurately the way you feel. It can be your strongest sales weapon or it can be a weapon of self-destruction in salesmanship.

Did you ever get a letter full of good news—from your wife, or your sweetheart—when you were out on the road? You felt exuberant for hours afterwards. You walked with a spring in your step. And your good feeling fairly beamed in your voice!

You've hit your thumb with a hammer, haven't you? Your thumb hurt for hours afterwards. And every time you spoke, during those hours, your voice conveyed that sharp pain.

And when you're cold, chilled to the bone, your voice may not tremble—but the cold will be right there in your voice and your customer will feel the chill.

You're hungry. You like peaches. You bite into a ripe, juicy peach—and your voice will have the taste of that peach in it.

• Now what does all this mean to your selling? It means that you will have to keep fit, mentally and physically. It means that you must at all times keep your spirits up, catch the top of the morning and keep it all day. Old stuff,

you say. Maybe it is, but it is an important rule of the game. Make an invoice of the salesmen you know; see how many of the old grouches are at the top of the list.

**8. Relax!**—That's right . . . just take it easy. A real salesman has to have the perfect, controlled relaxation of the trained athlete . . . the sort of relaxation which implies a capacity for vigorous action without draining the body of strength. If you find your customers yawning in your face, the trouble may be that your speaking voice is simply lifeless. On the other hand, if your voice is so harsh, rough, or shrill as to irritate your customers, then the trouble may be that you are constantly nervous, tense. A salesman can't afford to be either tense or completely lifeless. He must be relaxed! We have noted before that your physical condition always shows up in your voice. The repetition here is justified. Your body is an organism . . . and the voice, a part of the organism, is influenced and controlled by the other parts. If you are constantly tense as a taut rope, your voice cannot be pleasant! If you are, on the other hand, about as lively physically as a dead haddock . . . well, your voice is a part of that picture. Be alive, alert, ready for any unexpected turn of events but keep that necessary relaxation. This will reduce physical and nervous tension and help your voice to have a restful and pleasant quality.

**9. That confidential tone.**—We know a big fellow named Dutch who sells automobile supplies. Normally he has a big bellowing voice. In ordinary conversations you can hear him a block away. But he is talking to a customer. The customer gets interested. Dutch's sales sense tells

him that the customer is almost sold, and then his voice slips down into a soft, confidential whisper that makes the customer feel, "Now here is the straight dope from a man who knows." Dutch's friends and those who know him best recognize this tone as a signal to pull out the fountain pen and sign on the dotted line.

Dutch clinches many of his sales by using the soft pedal, the confidential tone. Of course, you can't be too obvious about using it. There is a danger of sounding artificial and insincere. Be sure that your voice has a warm welcome during the first minute of your sales talk, then the confidential tone will be more persuasive in the last minute.

**10. That awkward pause.**—When you pause, you allow your customer to think up an excuse of some kind. And for every excuse your customer invents you are thrown for a five-yard loss. Remember that the human mind is constantly active, so keep the customer busy and interested. Excuses that do not come up do not require handling. Excuses may be used to make a sale as well as spoil one. When answering an excuse, handle it gently. Don't argue or pounce upon the excuse. Step on it lightly as you would on a stone in marshy ground. If you jump on it with full force, you will sink. It will arouse antagonism and your sale will be lost. But use it gently and spring away as quickly as possible to solid footing.

**11. Grating on the nerves.**—Have you ever written on the blackboard when you struck a hard place in the chalk, so that it screeched shrilly? Or have you ever heard a scoop-shovel grate across a nail? How did you feel? The sound set your teeth on edge, didn't it? It made shivers

run up and down your spine. For several minutes afterwards, your nerves were jangling to that unholy screech.

All right, remembering that, let us ask you how you think a customer feels when he has to listen to a salesman with a high-pitched, thin, squeaky voice? Of course, it's not as bad as chalk on the blackboard, or a scoop-shovel over a nail. *But the effect is the same.* A high-pitched, squeaky voice is a sale-killer. It sets the listener's nerves on edge. It is the quickest way emotionally to set the prospective customer against you.

Your voice should make the customer feel easy, relaxed, restful. When he is relaxed, his mind will be open to your suggestions. Chancellor Adolf Hitler sold himself to the Germans long before he became dictator. How did he do it? When they were at work? No. When they were tense at merry-making? No! He held his fireside chats at five and six in the afternoon, when the people were relaxed, at ease. Then their minds responded best to his hypnotic slogans and appeals. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* mentioned Philco's slogan, "No squat, no stoop, no squint," as the best advertising tag-line of the year. Here's the best salesman's slogan for any year: no squeak, no squawk, no squeal.

12. The "goosey" voice.—We find the goosey voice among saleswomen selling to women customers. Saleswomen behind the counters of variety stores, department stores, and popular priced ready-to-wear women's clothing stores are commonly guilty of too much sweet talking. Such words as "honey" and "dearie," especially "dearie," are worked overtime. It's "dearie" this and "honey" that

until the sales talk becomes quite a gushy affair. This type of sweet talk is generally resented by women buyers, but why the girls behind the counters insist upon all this gooeyness remains one of the mysteries of the modern world.

**13. Sell by listening.**—Among all this discussion of the salesman's voice, we should never forget that the customer has a voice too—and that he likes to use it. Let the customer talk! Let him state his opinions and particularly his objections. If he is simply stalling on you, he'll talk himself into the sale. If he's not, then you owe it to him to listen to what he has to say.

The customer regards his opinions as worthy of respect. See that you regard them the same way. Listen to them, treat them as valid objections. Give him every chance to raise his objections, then follow up these objections as accurately as possible. Repeat them verbatim, even try to catch the inflection and emphasis of the voice. This gives your customer the impression that you are fair and that you understand, and that you have his objections well in mind. It makes him feel that he is buying something and that you are not selling him anything. Handle each objection with your best conversational strategy. But watch your voice so that it does not become domineering or overaggressive.

Beware of the weary, tired voice. Your voice is a sensitive barometer, quick to register how you feel in body, mind, and soul. When you are physically tired after hours of work and your mind is sluggish and your spirit is low, you should be more careful than ever about your voice.

Conceal your true feelings in your speech by sheer will power. At that moment when your other faculties are below par, concentrate on keeping the voice above par. Let the voice be the last to show your weariness. Be a good actor and try to create the impression that you are alert and on your toes by keeping plenty of pep and enthusiasm in your voice. Put on a good front by showing patience and friendliness in your sales talk until the final closing moment of the day.

**14. Keep your personality in your voice.**—Your personality must always be reflected to its fullest extent in your voice. Don't be artificial, casual, or commonplace. No matter if the sale be ten cents or a thousand dollars, don't let it seem trivial or menial. Keep that businesslike attitude at all times. Radiate the highest respect and dignity for the work that you are doing. Above all, honor and respect yourself, your product and your work. It will show in your voice.

## CHAPTER 7

### HOW YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR VOICE

In other chapters we showed you how the voice was an important but neglected tool of the salesman. We pointed out the magic power of the voice and outlined the steps for developing the sure-footed voice. We gave you a few simple rules for talking over the telephone and discussed various aspects of the voice in everyday salesmanship. We have offered words of advice and discussed theories and principles. Now we will get down to cases and lay out a practical program for the self-cultivation of your own voice. We will take up, step by step, exercises which you can practice in the privacy of your own home.

Before you set out to do anything about improving your own voice, be sure you understand in an elementary way how your voice works. See the reasons back of certain exercises. This does not mean you have to have a course in human anatomy, that you must master a lot of difficult physiological terms. All you need to know is the basic principles which lie underneath.

Look at the voice mechanism. It's make-up is very simple. Let's compare it to the pipe-organ. The latter has three main divisions: (1) the motor, (2) the vibrator, and (3) the resonator. Your voice is built on the same plan as the organ. The motor in the pipe-organ corresponds to your diaphragm and the abdominal muscles. Here we get the force for driving the air over the vocal cords. The

energy or intensity of this force depends upon the strength and control of the diaphragm. You shout the word "Fire!" in an explosive tone, and the air rushes out abruptly. You say the word "Ah" in a long, drawn-out, effusive tone, and the same principle is at work, only the air pressure is spread over a longer period of time. The reeds in the organ furnish the vibration. They can be compared to the vocal cords housed in the Adam's apple. Without the reeds there would be no tone. Without the vocal cords there would be no sound produced. The vocal cords create the original tone. This tone varies in pitch when the cords are tightened or loosened, just as do the strings on a violin. Now we come to the third division of the human and the musical instrument: namely, the resonator. The pipes of the organ compose the sounding chambers. The sounding chamber is important in any musical instrument: violin, piano, banjo, and all the rest. And it is an all-important part of the human instrument. You have resonating cavities—sinuses, teeth, soft and hard palate, the bony structure of the head—all of which play the part of a sounding board. The sounding-board equipment must be effectively used to produce clear, rich tones with carrying power. When part of the sounding-board equipment breaks down, the quality of your voice is immediately affected. Say, for example, that you catch a bad cold and your head is stuffed up. If the sounding chambers are clouded, your voice may have a nasal twang or it may sound dull and muffled.

The human and the musical instruments are analogous from the point of view of the motor, the vibrator, and the resonator. But here our analogy ends. The human instrument goes one step further. It has another very important

function: the utterance of words, of articulate speech. You can stop or modify sounds with the organs of pronunciation and articulation—the tongue, lips, teeth, jaws, and palate.

Now, of course, when you talk you are not conscious of the divisions of your voice mechanism. You don't stop to think how your motor works or whether your resonating machinery is in order. You talk as naturally as you breathe. All the parts of the voice mechanism work automatically in complete harmony. But you want to set out to improve your voice, make it more pleasing, more distinct, more colorful. You want to talk more efficiently. Without being too technical, we suggest that you take up, step by step, seven points which play an important part in the process of producing a good voice. These seven steps are: (1) proper relaxation, (2) proper breathing and motorization, (3) vital, dynamic tone, (4) proper tone placement and resonance, (5) adequate flexibility and color, (6) beautiful, pleasing voice, and (7) distinct utterance.

**1. Getting proper relaxation.**—Relaxation is the first rule for the golf player. Why? Because tense muscles interfere with perfect coordination. It isn't how hard you hit the ball, it's how efficiently you hit it. This principle of relaxation is even more important in the use of your voice. Tenseness in the muscles which control the vocal cords will restrict the voice. It will tire you. It will make your voice high-pitched, and sometimes raspy and unpleasant.

**Plan 1.** A good way to get the throat to relax is to yawn heartily several times and repeat slowly, in a sing-

song manner, the words "wah-wah-wah; woe-woe-woe; woo-woo-woo." Try to relax all the tension in your neck, in your throat, tongue, lips, and face. Stand with the body relaxed, chest slightly lifted, and breathe normally.

Plan 2. Lie down on your bed without a pillow, arms relaxed above the head. Try to yawn a few times and then say "unhuh, hunhuh" (meaning "yes" and "no") with your lips closed. Get a wide swoop of the tone upward for "yes" and a wide swoop downward for "no."

Plan 3. Try outward applications, such as massaging your throat. Also use hot towel applications and gargle your throat with a light solution of warm salt water.

2. Proper breathing and motorization.—If you want to see a perfect example of proper breathing, watch a healthy, sleeping baby. Notice him when he wakes up, and gurgles, or laughs. Watch him when he is crying angrily. You'll see the natural and perfect functioning of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles. The big voice coming from the little fellow gets its force from the diaphragm, not from the lungs. Did you ever laugh until your sides ached? If you have, you did most of your laughing around your upper waist line. The diaphragm and the abdominal muscles were overworked. That's why they felt sore.

Plan 1. A good way to check on the proper use of your diaphragm while you speak is to lie down on your bed, take a few long deep breaths, count deliberately to twenty on one breath and let out the remainder of the air in short, jerky hisses. Then hiss sharply and explosively from six to ten times.

Plan 2. Alternate your explosive hissing with the word "zoom," in this manner: "hiss, hiss, hiss—zoom, zoom, zoom, zoom," and so forth.

Plan 3. Take a few deep breaths and let the air out explosively by using the words "huh" and "hah." Take the air in rapidly. Then try to pant like a dog—first with long pants like a big dog, then with short pants like a little dog.

3. **Work for a vital dynamic tone.**—No one likes a dead, lifeless voice. The anemic voice can't make money. There should be power in your voice. You can get more vigor in your voice if you develop an adequate reserve strength in your diaphragm. You may have a car that can go one hundred and ten miles an hour; yet you never drive it over sixty. But that reserve power gives you confidence, helps save the motor, and generally gives you efficiency in performance.

Plan 1. *ABC marathon.* Say the ABC's each day as often as you can on one breath. Practice this until you can comfortably say the ABC's four or five times on one breath.

Plan 2. *Whispering exercise.* Whisper loudly and distinctly the sentence, "The whispering wires whisper wistfully," so you may be heard from thirty to fifty feet away indoors.

Plan 3. *Military commands.* Practice military commands, such as "Company halt!", "Forward march!", "Number One fire!", "Number Two fire!", "Number Three fire!", and so on.

Plan 4. *Train-calling exercise.* Imagine you are in a large railroad station and you're calling trains. Here's a sample: "All aboard for Chicago, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. Train on Track 7 now ready. All aboard!" Be sure to use a round, full voice, with long and drawn-out tones.

4. **Resonance and tone placement.**—When we talk about resonance, we are talking about the proper carrying power of the voice. Certain cavities and resonating surfaces have the power to amplify the sound vibration, thus giving them the fuller, stronger and more pleasing quality. Without the sounding board aids in the voice instrument, your tones would be flat and dull. Imagine the piano without a sounding board or a violin without its sound box. The main sounding board of your voice is the mask or front part of your face. You should always try to speak as though you were throwing your tones out in front of you. Stand a few steps from the door of your room and imagine you are shooting your tones through the keyhole of the door. The following resonating exercises are perhaps the most practical and valuable voice aids in this chapter. Their results are definite and immediate.

Plan 1. *Humming and singing exercises.* Repeat rapidly in a chanting manner, "me, me, me, me, me, me." Do the same with words ending in m, n, and ng. Chant rapidly such words as "mine, mine, mine"; "none, none, none"; "ring, ring, ring." Let the tones leap from your lips. Try humming until there is a tickling sensation in your lips. This exercise can be conveniently practiced while driving in your car. It helps to bring the tones to the

front of the face and is a great aid in proper tone placement. A few minutes of resonating exercises two or three times a day will help to keep your voice in tune.

Plan 2. *Spring-board exercise.* Spring quickly from the nasal tone, m, n, and ng, to the open throat tones, ah, ō, and ōō, in this manner: "m-ah, m-ō, m-ōō; n-ah, n-ō, n-ōō; ng-ah, ng-ō, ng-ōō."

5. **Flexibility and color.**—When we speak about monotony, we are not only talking about the voice which is on a dead level and is classed as a monotone. We are talking about a voice which is fixed or set in the use of pitch, rate, and quality. Such a voice follows a simple pattern of inflection and tone. Whatever variation it may have appears in such a recurring pattern that it is not so much a one "tone" voice as a one "tune" voice. You can, however, break up this type of monotony and develop a melodious voice where the niceties of pitch and the variations of rate and force create a tuneful, interesting effect.

Plan 1. Practice the following colloquial expressions and exaggerate the inflections even to the point of being melodramatic in your expression:

- (a) Oh, I don't know.
- (b) Oh, yeah, that's what you think.
- (c) Why, of course I'm going to the ball game.
- (d) Oh, I'm weary and tired and I want to go home.

Plan 2. Try to be melodious in your speaking and practice the following sentences several times in succession, always changing the speech melody pattern without sacrificing the essential meaning:

- (a) I walked across the street and whom do you think I saw?  
I saw my old friend Charlie, all dressed up wearing a top hat, carrying a cane, and smoking a big, black cigar.
- (b) An old clock, that stood in the family kitchen for fifty years or more, without giving its owner any cause for complaint, early one Sunday morning before any of the family were stirring, suddenly stopped.

**6. Working for a beautiful voice.**—The beauty of your speech depends upon the openness of your vowels and the definiteness of your consonants. The vowel is the root of the word. Give the vowel every chance to be full, rich, round, and clear in tone. Don't choke your vowels short or cut them off too abruptly with consonants. Take the simple line, "Oh, I'm weary and lonely and I long to go home." First say it in a staccato manner, smothering the vowel sounds. Now say it allowing the vowels all possible freedom and fullness of expression. You will notice the effusive tone that you put into the tone "weary," "lonely," and "long." Notice how much more pleasing to the ear is the second manner of expression.

**Plan 1.** Practice saying the vowels in a smooth, effusive manner: "a-e-i-o-u." Let the tones roll out evenly in a singing manner. Try long slides and swoops. Also, try going up and down the musical scale.

**Plan 2.** Practice the three sounds äh, ōh, and ōō separately. First try to get a smooth, even, drawn-out tone, then practice each sound with a swell or crescendo, light touch at the beginning and end of the tone and maximum volume in the middle, thus äh ○, ōh ○, ōō ○.

**Plan 3.** Read aloud poetic selections which are written in a reverential or sublime mood, such as Kipling's "Reces-

sional" or the Biblical Psalms. Work for rich, round, full tones.

7. **Distinct utterances.**—Now we come to the problem of a clear, distinct utterance. This calls for open vowels with definite clean-cut articulation of consonants. While precision must always be your watchword, remember that the virtue of precision may be overdone, for diction which is painfully precise will seem labored and the sounds artificial and affected. Speech which suffers from overprecision may be equally as faulty as speech which suffers from sluggishness and careless articulation. The ideal is to have the maximum precision along with naturalness and with the least amount of effort.

Words and syllables are made according to one common pattern. They are composed of vowels and consonants. The vowels give the basic tone and the consonants start, stop, modify, and heighten the tone effect of the vowels. Most of the stumbling and mumbling in the articulation of words may be traced to the difficulties in expressing the consonantal elements.

Distinct utterance also involves the matter of correct and acceptable pronunciation. When we speak of pronunciation we refer to the correctness with which words are uttered. This involves: (1) giving the vowels and consonants their correct sound, (2) dividing the words into proper syllables, and (3) placing the accent on the right syllable. Since there is no absolute standard of pronunciation, we recommend the conventional standards. That is, to use the brand of speech most likely to be acceptable to the best educated people of your locality.

Plan 1. *Lip exercises.* Speak the following words several times and exaggerate the action of the lips: "blub, burp, puppy, purple, putrid, bubbling, popping, pimples, blimp, bump."

Also, practice speaking the following sentences several times with the teeth tightly together, using exaggerated lip action.

(a) But I do believe the bubble did burst.

(b) The pears left on the tree rotted before they fell on the ground.

Plan 2. *Tongue exercises.* Stick your tongue out pointedly as far as you can from five to ten times. Stretch it thoroughly. Then say: "lā, lē, lī, lō, lōō"—first slowly, then accelerate your speed gradually until you go as fast as you can.

Plan 3. *Lips and jaw exercises.* Practice the following syllables and words with moderately explosive utterance: blah, blah, blah, etc.; buttonhole, buttonhole, buttonhole; bah, fah, mah, pah, wah.

Plan 4. *Practice precision.* Practice the following words and phrases several times, giving special care to accurate articulation:

government (not gov'ment)

beautiful (not beaudiful)

partner (not pardner)

battle (not baddle)

hundred (not hundurd)

eleven (not 'leven)

city (not cidy)

how do you do (not howjaddo)

did you win (not dijuwin)

I want to go (not Iwannago)

Plan 5. *Difficult combinations.* Practice the following words which contain many syllables, paying special attention to distinctness, giving each syllable precise utterance:

innumerable	incendiarism	unanimously
congratulatory	temporarily	necessarily
chronological	heterogeneous	inexplicable
absolutely	unanimity	extraordinarily

Plan 6. Study and practice the *principal vowel and diphthong sounds*:

#### VOWELS:

ā as in father. This tone is commonly used for training the singing voice. It is one of the most open sounds we have and is the least obstructed. It should be made with the mouth open and throat relaxed. Practice words: far, heart, arm, calling, psalm.

ä as in cat. Be sure to keep this tone clear and not drawn out nor permit it to be too nasal. Practice words: hat, man, hand, ran, sad, sand, sang.

â as in after. This vowel is about midway between ä and ä. Practice words: dance, ask, grass, draught, class.

ē as in meat. The tone is made in the front of the mouth and usually gives little difficulty. Practice words: evening, see, meal, hero, bean, tweed, ear.

ě as in met. This sound is very similar to the â. Practice words: let, hem, lend, send, pen, end.

ā as in mate. The Englishmen speaking the London cockney often mispronounce this sound, calling it ä plus ē, sounding like long ī. He says lidy for lady. Practice words: made, ache, play, raid, jail, say, pray, may.

ĩ as in sit. This is a shortened sound often confused with short e. Some say ġit for ġet. Practice words: fit, hit, wit, with, if, finish.

ô as in orb. This sound is often heard in raucous laughter: hor! hor! hor! The lips are rounded. It is very similar to the broad Italian a (ä). Practice words: call, talk, bought, law.

ö as in pot. Practice words: pod, nod, caught, hot, fog, coffee.

ō as in old. Sometimes classed as a diphthong, ô-ōō. Practice words: grow, cold, over, road, so, moat, oats, window, tomorrow, go, note.

ũ and õõ as in book. Practice words: put, book, soot, could, rook, look.

ō as in food. Practice words: do, goose, lose, proof, moon, boot.

ŭ as in cup. This sound may be slightly drawled. Practice words: supper, butter, shut, buzz, luck.

û as in urge (circumflex u). This sound is very similar to German umlaut o. Do not draw it out too long. Practice words: serge, bird, shirt, curve, urge.

A diphthong is a combination of a basic vowel sound with another vowel or a sound that is grafted onto a consonant. It really is two sounds in one. The following are the most common diphthongs:

DIPHTHONG:

ou á+ō as in shout, house, out, louse, mouse.

oi ô+ī as in oil, soil, boy, moist, royal.

ī á+ī as in rice, fly, ice, high.

u ī+ō as in student, new, duty, Tuesday.

Plan 7. Study and practice the *principal consonants* as used in sentences. Consonants may be classified into four main groups:

- (a) "Nasals." These all are voiced.
- (b) "Stops," voiced and voiceless.
- (c) Fricatives, voiced and voiceless.
- (d) Hybrid sounds and semi-vowels.

The division of the consonants may be illustrated by the following table:

<i>Nasals</i>		<i>Stops</i>			<i>Fricatives</i>				<i>Semi-vowels</i>		
<i>Voiced</i>		<i>Voiced</i>	<i>Voiceless</i>		<i>Voiced</i>		<i>Voiceless</i>		<i>Voiced</i>		
m	mat	b	bee	p	pea	v	vine	f	fine	w	wed
n	nag	d	din	t	tin	z	zeal	s	seal	r	rat
ng	ring	g	gave	k	cave	z(zh)	azure	s(sh)	assure	l	late
						th	they	th	thin	y	yet
								wh	why		
								h	how		

## NASALS:

*Voiced*

## (Group One)

## M

1. Many men make money Monday morning.
2. Move your moth removers on a May morning.
3. Jim and Tom came home with some gum.

## N

1. No new nation names nominal national navies.
2. Non-negotiable notes are not necessary now.
3. Nice Nancy needs new knitting needles.

## NG

1. People are singing, laughing, shouting, swearing, talking, and enjoying themselves.
2. Raining, snowing, and sleeting are leaving and spring is returning.
3. Blowing breezes bring bending boughs to building saplings.
4. Hearing, seeing, smelling, feeling, tasting, doing—that's living.

## STOPS:

*Voiced*

## (Group Two)

## B

1. Bad Betty banned Bert Brady and banished Bill belligerently.
2. Brightly bedecked bonnets on bespeckled belles have become bygones now.
3. Big black bears bite nastier than big brown bears because big black bears bite bigger bits.
4. Bashful bathing beauties become beautiful babes because of basking in bright beams.

## D

1. Daring Daniel entered Danzig dancing divinely.
2. Don't double deal darling damsels.

3. Dribbling drops of dripping dew drummed a doleful dirge dropping from a dingy decanter.
4. Dirty Dan dunked doughnuts in a dirty dark drink.

## G

1. Great big gobblers grew great on George's green grass.
2. Grey geese and grouse go grumbling in a grouch by green gourds.
3. George groveled gropingly giving growling gasps.
4. Geraldine grimaced, George gasped and grinned.

*Voiceless*

## P

1. Peter Piper permanently peddles pecans and potatoes.
2. Playful Peter played at a pretty pompous party with pious Paul.
3. Pickled peppers give passionate piggish pups sore palates.

## T

1. Tommy Tinker thought the turbaned Turk tranquil.
2. Two tiny tenpins telling tattle tales toppled.
3. Tillie's tiny tendons twitched as she tip-toed daintily over two treacherous toadstools.
4. Tinkering Tommy took two times two tomatoes to town.

## K

1. Crazy Cat kept watching Kay tap a keg of the Kaiser's cool Country Club Beer.
2. The "Kit-Kat" kills kill-joys keenly.
3. Kitchen kisses keep cooks contented.
4. The cow and the cat come in cans.

*Voiced*

## (Group Three)

## V

1. The voice of the voter volunteers votes.
2. Vera vouched voluntarily for Virginia.
3. Valiant Vincent vexed vivacious Vivian.

## Z

1. The buzzing bees stung Ezra the zebra.
2. The zebra zigzagged to the zoo in Zimmerman's Zeppelin.
3. Zane Grey never went zooming in a zephyr.

## Z or Zh

(This sound never occurs at the beginning of the word)

1. I take pleasure in measuring the Persian.
2. The explosion in the garage in a measure blurred my vision.
3. The Persian recognized the unusual occasion by using rouge and wearing a corsage.

## TH

1. There are those leather bathing trunks.
2. The lithe fellow went hither and thither like heathen brethren.
3. I would rather clothe the other brethren than go bathing without them.

*Voiceless*

## F

1. Fools feel foolish for affectionate females.
2. Funny faces feel free from frowns.
3. Fish fit for frying are fit for Fanny Farmer.
4. Fatty Finch found few fifes in Farmer Frank's flue for few flues have fifes.
5. Few flying fishes' fins flip and flop when they fly.

## S

1. Some seagulls sing silly sassy songs as they soar over ships on salty seas.
2. Seven swallows sat side by side on the silo sill.
3. Susie Sampson saw a swimmer swimming in the swollen sea.
4. Sally Smith sells shoes, saddles, safety pins, soap, and sacks.

## S or Sh

1. Surely the assurance I should show should shorten the shock of sharing.
2. The chef of the mansion showed the luscious mushrooms to the sheriff with righteousness.

## TH

1. Three thousand thistles were thrown through thirty-three thickets.
2. Theron's sympathy went to the wealthy as he thought of the theft.

## WH

1. What bobwhite whistled in the wheat?
2. The question is when, where, what, and why.
3. Whistling whippoorwills whistled while whales whimpered.

## H

1. He had an hour to hide his hat.
2. Had Henry held his half of the hill Harvey would have hiked home.
3. Hoist the hay high behind the hen house.

## SEMI-VOWELS:

*Voiced*

## (Group Four)

## W

1. Weary Woodrow went the wayward way.
2. William Wilson will win the award by walking west.
3. Wesley was rewarded when he wed the wealthy widow, Wilma.

## R

1. Rudy Ralph Roark roved o'er rambling rolls of rippling rustling rubber.
2. Really red roses reared red rimmed heads over rows and rows of rhubarb.
3. Riegles' Rolls Royce rolled rapidly around Rebecca's red road-house.
4. Ruth rebuked Robert for rebuffing the rebellion.

## L

1. Let little lame Lou love lambs.
2. Little Lannie left Lois's letter lying lengthwise.
3. Lillie's leopard limped languidly along lines of loose leaves.

## Y

1. You yawn and your genial young yodeler yodels yet.
2. You yield to peculiar behavior and yet you yearn for youth.
3. A million youths are yet beyond your opinion.

**Getting a measurement of your voice.**—The positive and negative voice score cards are devised for obtaining in a somewhat scientific manner a measurement of the virtues and faults of your voice. First, be your own critic. Rate yourself. Give your own honest opinion of your voice, even though you may not be as good a judge as others. Your personal estimate of yourself will be of little value by itself. Its main value lies in comparing it to what other people think of you. Therefore, get a number of people—friends who will be truthful, casual acquaintances, and strangers—to fill out the cards. It is better that these cards should not be filled out in your presence. You want an impartial estimate of your own voice as it appears to others. After fifteen or twenty people have conscientiously filled out the rate sheet, add up the total and prepare a final balance sheet for your own study and observation.

Examples of rating cards are given on pages 88 and 89. These may be of assistance in working out your rating.

## WHAT IS YOUR POSITIVE VOICE SCORE?

This is a positive voice score. If the answer to one of these questions is a clear "yes," put down a five in the right-hand column; if the answer is a "sometimes" or a "maybe," put down two; if the answer is a decisive "no," put down a zero. 90 to 100 is an excellent—and a rare—score; 80 to 90 is good; 70 to 80 is fair; below 70 is unsatisfactory.

1. Is your voice dynamic and forceful? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is your voice pleasing to hear? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does your voice have a variety of inflections? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is your articulation clear-cut and distinct? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is your speech natural and unaffected? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is your voice cordial and friendly? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is your voice melodious? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you always easily understood? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you speak at the proper rate? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Are your tones clear? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does your voice have enough resonance? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you maintain a good level of pitch? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you speak fluently? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you use normal and natural thought phrasing? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you use accepted pronunciations? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Is your voice flexible enough to rise and fall naturally? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you control your voice at all times? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Do you maintain force in your voice, so as to carry the  
thought out to the end of the sentence? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Do you always emphasize the thought rather than the  
words? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Is your voice agreeable when you laugh? \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT IS YOUR NEGATIVE VOICE SCORE?

This is a negative voice score. If the answer to one of these questions is "yes" put down a minus five; if it is "maybe" or "sometimes" put down minus two; if it is "no" put down zero. Of course, the lower the numerical score, the fewer voice faults you have. A score of 0 to -10 is excellent; -10 to -20 is good; -20 to -30 is fair; -30 and above is unsatisfactory.

1. Is your speech loud or noisy? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are your tones muffled and indistinct? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is your speech artificial or affected? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you guilty of the "goeey" voice? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you have a tendency to choke off vowel sounds? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does your voice sound breathy? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is your voice husky? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Is your voice of the whining type? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you have the "uh" habit? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Does your voice have a nasal twang? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Is it too high and shrill? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you use a dominating, dictatorial tone? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Is your speech jerky? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you jumble up consonants, making your speech  
unintelligible? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Do you hesitate, stammer, or stutter? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you commonly mispronounce words? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Is your voice monotonous? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Does your voice fade out badly at the end of  
phrases and sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Is your voice flat, dull, or colorless? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Is your laugh unpleasant? \_\_\_\_\_
- TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_



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